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ABYSSINIAN TRAVELLING.

LIFE IN ABYSSINIA:

BEING NOTES COLLECTED DURING

88339
a

THREE YEARS' RESIDENCE AND TRAVELS

IN THAT COUNTRY.

By MANSFIELD PARKYNS.

Ya-d-5

IN TWO VOLUMES.—Vol. II.

WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

YA. d. 5

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1853.

" Like an old tale still; which will have matter to rehearse, though credit be asleep, and not an ear open."

WINTER'S TALE, Act. V. Scene 2.

" Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd
From wandering on a foreign strand?"

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

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LIFE IN ABYSSINIA.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE, DRESS, &c.

THE Abyssinians are of middle stature, averaging I should think about 5 feet 7 inches, rather more than less. I have seldom seen natives above 6 feet, and only one or two who reached 6 feet 2 inches. In colour some of them are perfectly black; but the majority are brown, or a very light copper or nut colour. This variety of complexion, observable in both sexes, is, I should think, attributable to the mixture of races of which the nation is composed.* Although in some districts certain colours appear to predominate slightly over others, yet I have never seen any district, and seldom

* The word "Habash" (the native name for Abyssinian) means, I believe, a "mixture" in the Giz language. A mixture of various qualities of corn goes by that name in some of the provinces of Tigré. It is supposed by some that a great number of Jews followed the Queen of Sheba, on her return from her visit to Solomon, and that a large colony of fugitives also took refuge in Abyssinia about the time of the destruction of the temple and the captivity. Subsequently the Greeks sent missionaries, and they were doubtless accompanied by adventurers; and the Portuguese sent a number of troops, some of whom remained in the country for many years.

even any family, in which you could trace uniformity of colour. In features perhaps you might do so. The family of Afa Memher Wàdy Hyl, chief of Rohabaita, claims descent from Greek ancestors; and certainly if the prominence of features of some of its members be any proof whereby to substantiate such claim, they have it most decidedly. The old man's face, though copper-coloured, is quite European. His son, Deftera Maherca (since dead), had a nose that would eclipse the largest that ever "Punch" has dared to attribute to the great Duke—a high, marked forehead, well-formed chin and mouth, and was in nowise to be recognised as an Abyssinian, but for his rather too curly hair, dark complexion, and hollow cheeks. This latter is very common, and I think in many cases attributable to the prevalence of the Tænia. Still, owing to there being few (I might almost say *no*) binding marriages in these countries, a man may have around him a family the produce of five or six different wives; and, as many of them naturally take after their respective mothers, you may see a brother almost white with a soot-black sister, as in the case of Maherca and his sister Martou, who, though very pretty, was jet black, or *vice versâ*, as in the case of my servant, Bainasai, who was as black as a coal, short and thick set, and had a sister who was taller than himself, and nearly as fair as an Egyptian. Both men and women are remarkably well formed, and in general handsome—often strikingly so. Some few of the men are a little ill-shaped about the lower limbs and feet; but as this is rare, and, even where it does

occur, scarcely observable in comparison with a genuine nigger's, I attribute it to overwork and going barefoot when young. The women of the higher classes have remarkably pretty feet and shapes, owing to the absence of the horrible confining fashions: they however soon fall off, chiefly I imagine from climate, though partly perhaps from want of the artificial supports which are usual in European countries. But this to a traveller matters little, as in passing through the country he seldom sees anything but the beautiful forms of young girls, who go half-naked; while married women, always wearing long loose shirts, and quarries over them, effectually conceal their figures, whether they be good or bad. Occasionally, however, he sees servants and working women of the lower classes stripped to the waist when grinding corn, or otherwise laboriously occupied. From sights like these he will turn away his head, not from modesty, but from sheer disgust; for from habit, after a few days, one forgets altogether to remark that the natives are rather lightly clad: and truly I am even now at a loss to understand why allowing the foot to be seen should be considered less modest than exposure of the hand, or the ankle than the wrist; in fact, why our ladies should go to a ball with bare arms, and yet many of them be horrified if only a few inches of silk stocking were visible. Many other incongruities might be named which with us custom and fashion have made a law, but which reason must at once ridicule for their absurdity. In feature, as in form, the young Abyssinian women are perhaps among the most

beautiful of any on the earth.* They must not, however, be confounded with the Galla slaves who are sold in Egypt under the name of Abyssinians, but who are of a very inferior caste. On the contrary, they have a face nearly European, with a colour not often dark enough to be disagreeable, but sufficiently so to prevent too great a contrast with their large black eyes—a defect which I have often noticed in some Asiatics, and even southern Europeans, especially where, as is often the case in the East, the complexion is sallow, or pure white, with little or no colour. They possess to an eminent degree the size and beauty of eye usually attributed to the inhabitants of the more sunny climes; sometimes indeed so large, that, if drawn accurately, the picture would undoubtedly appear exaggerated to persons unaccustomed to them. Homer seems to have assigned such eyes to Juno when he calls her Βοωπις (or ox-eyed), and Moore describes the fair Georgian, in "The Light of the Haram," as having

> ——"an eye, whose restless ray,
> Full, floating, dark—Oh! he who knows
> His heart is weak, of Heaven should pray
> To guard him from such eyes as those."

But Moore had not seen much of them when he wrote these beautiful lines. There are two things which very much strike an Englishman on visiting these countries for the first time—bright skies and dark eyes. But soon, very soon, he sickens of both, and longs to

* I have heard it remarked by a connoisseur that no women are to be compared to them but the French half-castes of the Mauritius.

reverse their order, and sighs for the dark grey skies of his native land,* still more for the bright grey eyes of her daughters; and most of all for "that *soul* in the eyes, which is worth all the rest of loveliness"—

> ——— "the soul, still near,
> To light each charm, yet independent
> Of what is lighted, as the sun
> That shines on flowers would be resplendent
> Were there no flowers to shine upon."

Though flowers of beauty nowhere bloom with more luxuriance than in Æthiopia, yet, alas! there shines on them no mental sun. Passion, the species of affection borne by a faithful dog to its master, and childish gratitude for kindnesses, are the best qualities discernible in the physiognomy of an Eastern woman;—the best that a Mussulman would anticipate, even in a Houri of his Paradise.

For dress, the male Abyssinians wear a pair of tight cotton inexpressibles, a large belt, and a "quarry," or mantle, of the same material. As I have before remarked, the dress of the soldiers and peasantry is nearly alike; that of the former being only of a rather more stylish cut. Much in the same way as in England, and everywhere in Europe, the "citadini" are distinguishable from the "contadini" by the cut of their cloth.

* I am not the only traveller who has experienced these sensations. The following characteristic remark, made by an English sailor to his messmate, when, after a long cruize in the Mediterranean, they had once, for a wonder, a raw, drizzly morning off Smyrna, fully bears out my feeling, at least on the subject of skies: "I say, Jack! this here's what I calls regular jolly weather, blowed if it ar'nt. None of your eternal blue skies!"

Now as this inferiority of the countryman in the style of his clothes, whether in Abyssinia or elsewhere, depends not so much on his taste as on the ignorance of his tailor, I shall in my description allude to the costume of those who lead the fashion—not of those who make ineffectual attempts at following it. If a stranger were to attempt to describe the dress of an Englishman, he ought surely to choose his model at a good tailor's.

The trousers are of a soft-textured but rather coarse cotton stuff, made in the country, and are of two sorts; one called "càlliss," the other "coumta." The former reaches half-way down the calf of the leg, the latter to about three or four inches above the knee. Both, if the wearer be a dandy, are made skin-tight. I might enter into a long account of the peculiar fashions to which these trousers are subject, parts being doubled, parts single. One year it may be the fashion to have the seam at the side of the "càlliss," below the knee, of about two inches long only, before it branches off on the thigh; while another year it will be lengthened to six or eight inches. The last was the measure at which I left it. This, however, was considered so very ultra fashionable that, except Dejatch Shétou, myself, and one or two others, few dared to attempt it. It was I and my friend Shétou who first introduced the habit of allowing the sword to swing perpendicularly from the side, instead of its sticking out horizontally, like a dog's tail; as well as of wearing the belt over the hips, instead of round the waist and up to the armpits, as it was worn when I first arrived. These, with the in-

ABYSSINIAN WARRIORS (my own Silver-mounted Shield).

creased length of trousers, reaching as we wore them to nearly the ankle, and so tight below that it took an hour to draw them over the heel, gave a very 'fast' look, and were much patronised by "Young Abyssinia," though invariably decried by respectable elderly gentlemen. I have before mentioned how poor Shétou got turned out of his father's tent for a little too much of this exaggeration in costume.

The belts vary in length from 15 to 60 yards, and are about one yard in width. In quantity of cotton they are nearly all of the same weight, as the very long ones are in proportion finer than the shorter. An ordinary soldier's belt will measure from 30 to 40 cubits (15 to 20 yards). The one I usually wore was 70 cubits long (35 yards); while a few great chiefs—among them Dejatch Welda Yessous, Oubi's uncle,—who like giving themselves the trouble of turning round and round for a few minutes every time they put on their belts or take them off, have them as long as 120 cubits (60 yards). The belt is worn as a sort of defensive armour. I have heard men assert that it will protect its wearer not only from a club blow or sword cut, but even from the lance of an enemy; while others, who deny that it would resist a fair stroke of a lance, approve of it as a protection against blows which may glance off the shield, or which having pierced the shield (as they often do, if from carelessness or clumsiness the lance point be allowed to fall perpendicularly on it) would otherwise wound, or perhaps kill, its owner.

The "quarry" is the principal article of Abyssinian

dress: it is of cotton, and very fine and soft; those of the richer being finer but probably not so serviceable as those of the poorer class. It is made in three pieces; each piece is about three feet broad by fifteen feet long. Near both ends of each piece is a red stripe, five or six inches broad. To sew the three pieces together, one is first taken and doubled carefully, so that the red stripes of each end come exactly together. A second piece is then taken, and also folded, but inside out, and one half of it laid under and the other half over the first piece, so that the four red borders now come together. One edge of this quadruple cloth is then sewn from top to bottom, and the last-mentioned piece is turned back, so that the two together form one double cloth of two breadths. The third piece is now added in a similar manner, and the whole forms a "quarry," which, lest my reader should have got confused in the above description, is a white double cloth, with a red border near the bottom only; the breadth of the "quarry" is nine feet by seven and a half long. An inferior quality of this cloth is made of much coarser material, and without a stripe: this passes current in the markets of Tigrè, and is in fact their money; as salt, the Amhàra coin, and even dollars, are here counted as articles of commerce. The lower class of servants and working people wear these inferior cloths stitched together on common occasions, and perhaps have for Sunday best a "welda Gàber" or cheap "quarry" with a blue stripe. But above all is the "mergeff," a sort of cloth made after the fashion of the first-mentioned one, but of such fine-

ness that it requires to be of six pieces instead of three to give it sufficient body, and is worn quadruple instead of double. Its stripe or border is of red, yellow, and blue silk, neatly worked together, instead of plain red cotton. Such an article of finery is, of course, worn only by ladies and some few great men. It might cost about 30*s.*, while the price of a good "quarry" would be about 12*s.* or less, according to its quality and the value of cotton in the market. The methods of putting on the cloth are as various as the modes of wearing a Highland plaid. One of the most ordinary ways is first to place it like a cloak over the shoulders; the right end, which is purposely left longest, is then thrown over the left shoulder, and the bottom border, which would otherwise (from its length) trail on the ground, is gathered over the right shoulder. Thus the right arm is at liberty,* but the left covered. This, however, may be easily remedied by lifting up the left side of the cloth and placing it over the left shoulder in a moment, when both hands are required for any exercise.

Before sleeping, the men take off their belts and trousers without disarranging their cloth, which is of itself sufficient to keep them perfectly covered: and the women likewise divest themselves of their shirts. A bachelor rolls himself up in his cloth—head, feet, face, and all completely covered up. This I found at first a

* Both in colour and in the manner in which it is worn, the quarry of the Abyssinians may be seen to have much affinity with the toga of the ancient Romans, which, if my classic lore fail me not, was white, with a coloured border, and worn covering the left shoulder, but leaving the right arm at liberty.

rather disagreeable mode of sleeping, but soon got accustomed to it, and ultimately even preferred it to any other. Married couples sleep in the same manner; that is, quite naked, but rolled up close together in a sort of hydropathic dry pack, or double mummy fashion. They manage this, however, very cleverly; and I have often, when sleeping in a room with two or three married couples, been astonished at the graceful manner in which they prepare their bed without in the least degree exposing their bodies. They are seated either on the floor or "arat," the man at the woman's right hand; and when it is proposed to retire to rest, they place the short side of their "quarries" under each other, and the long ones over, so that they remain in the middle; half of each of their cloths under them and half over, without any danger of their getting untucked. I have seen as many as five couple packed up in this manner, all huddled together on one skin; and often, when wishing to leave a room during the night, from the heat or closeness, have been unable to pass without waking up some of the sleepers on the floor, so closely were they packed — men, women, and children.

In battle, or at other times when freedom of action is required, the cloth is laid aside, and the "dino" or "lemd," made of velvet, cloth, or the skin of some animal, is substituted. On ordinary occasions the latter kind is commonly worn over the "quarry" when out of doors, to prevent its being deranged by the wind.

In flaying an animal, if its skin be intended for wearing, the first incision is made down the side, lengthwise, and not along the belly. Then when the skin is com-

pletely taken off you will have a smooth upper edge above, and the skin of the belly and all four legs on the other side. If it be a small animal, such as an otter, lynx, calf, or lamb, the cutting-out and finishing must be rather different from that of the large skins. The lower half of the belly must be cut into strips of about two inches broad and three inches apart, and the pieces cut out from between them and stitched to them to lengthen them. Thus you will have left a body of about six inches broad, and eight strips hanging from the lower edge at equal distances, as a sort of fringe: they are the legs, tail, and the three strips described as cut out from the belly. In a large skin, however, you leave a broad body, and the strips are left simple, while in a small one they are often edged with yellow satin or calico, and the points cut into ornamental crosses or other devices. Of the larger sort of skins, the most esteemed for ordinary wear is that of a peculiar sort of sheep found in the Galla countries of Yejjon and Wara Himano. Its wool is long and straight. I have seen some that measured a good deal above two feet. An ordinary skin will cost 10*s.* to 15*s.*; but if of the length of wool I have mentioned, from 1*l.* to 1*l.* 10*s.* If not naturally so, the best skins are usually dyed black, though the natural red and white are also worn by some persons. I have been told that the existence of the unfortunate animals of this breed, like that of many European animals of a higher class in natural history, is entirely sacrificed to the cultivation of their exterior. They are said to be fed only on meat and milk, to be kept always on couches, and to have their hair combed and tressed regularly. Poor

sheep! after such a life, it can astonish no one that, when killed and deprived of their beautiful skin, there should be found to remain (as I have heard) a framework of bones without any flesh on them.

The skins of the lion and black panther are worn by the very great warriors on battle days, reviews, or other pageants. A handsome one of the former may fetch from 6*l.* to 10*l.* Those with a nearly black mane are preferred. The "càffey," or velvet mantle, also an article of "grande tenue," is cut nearly after the same fashion as the skins, and, like the two last mentioned, its whole surface is often profusely ornamented with stars, crosses, and other appropriate devices, in silver and silver gilt. Teddely Hailo, chief of Tsàgaddy, has one ornamented for him by a Greek silversmith at Àdoua, on which the silver of 150 German crowns was expended.

In placing calves' skins among those of the smaller animals, I should have said that I implied those calves taken out of the wombs of cows slaughtered in calf. These, from their fineness, resembling velvet, are much esteemed by dandies, especially if black; whereas the skin of a calf which had come into the world in the regular way would only be worn by a ploughman.

Besides the skins I have already mentioned, I might name those of the jackal from Simyen, the wild cat, and the "nebry gwolgwol" (or leopard cat)—an animal resembling a leopard, but scarcely larger than a cat. Some persons have, however, a prejudice against the skin of the red jackal, as it is supposed that, should a lance piercing the skin inflict a wound on its wearer,

and by ill luck a single hair of the jackal enter the wound, the patient is sure to die. All these "dinoes" are lined with red cloth, or chintz in which that colour predominates. The upper edge is neatly bound with scarlet morocco leather an inch wide, along which are usually sewn one or two gold and silver tinsel threads: the ends are brought together and fastened with a double row of amulets in green and red leather, which, when the skin is worn, appear in front of the chest or on the shoulder. The skins of the dog and hyena are never worn, and those of leopards only by the Zacchàri, or followers of Abouna Àbel (a set of impostors, like some of the Asiatic derwishes), and by some soldiers of the Galla and Shoa tribes.

While on the subject of skins, it may not be uninteresting nor useless to state how they are dressed or tanned, if such expression be justifiable, as I have found no better means for preparing skins, not intended for setting up, in any country. The fresh flayed skin is usually stretched in the sun to dry: this is done by nicking small holes round its edge, and driving little pointed pegs through them into the ground. Dried in this manner, it of course becomes hard and stiff, but will keep in a dry place for a long time. To soften it, a mixture of clotted milk and linseed flour is spread on it, and allowed to soak in for a night. It is then taken and folded up, fur outside, and trampled on and worked by the feet for a considerable time every morning till it becomes as soft as a piece of rag. After each "pedipulation" it is put away, covered with fresh grass pressed

down on it by heavy stones, to prevent its drying till the process is completed. When this operation has been continued some days, according to the quality of the skin, the fur is easily cleaned of whatever dirt may have attached to it, and the membrane of the skin may be peeled off, leaving it inside as soft as chamois leather, and quite white. If skins thus prepared are carefully packed up with a quantity of strong native tobacco, or black pepper, or—better than all—colocynth, they will be in no danger from insects. This method is of course only available for skins prepared flat, and can be of no use for stuffed specimens of natural history.

The men seldom wear any ornaments, excepting perhaps some strings of amulets, alternately silver and red morocco, or of the latter material only, and a plain silver hoop ring or two. There are, however, exceptions to this rule, for some men wear silver chains round their necks (though properly speaking these are the distinguishing marks of one who has killed an elephant). Dandies wear their amulets to a great length; those of some horsemen may be seen crossing each other, and hanging from each of the shoulders to the opposite knee; a highly-ornamented silver case, made to contain a pair of tweezers for extracting thorns from the feet, is frequently appended to the buckle of the sword—some great men even wear silver anklets like the women. On great occasions, however, those whose prowess in battle, or more often now-a-days whose conduct, has earned for them their masters' favour, wear silver badges of merit. These are the "bitoa," a sort of bracelet, or rather arm-

let, of silver, worn on the right arm, from the wrist to near the elbow. They open with a hinge, and fasten with a bolt-pin, and are most commonly of a silver ground, with ornaments of flowers, stars, circles, &c., punched or chased on them, and partly gilt. I have seen some very beautiful ones (nay, on one occasion I helped to make one at the Greek silversmith Michaël's), that were simple polished silver with gilt *fil-et-grain* work placed over it, and a border to correspond. The gilding is usually made to assume a red colour by a simple process. This gives a rich appearance to the *fil-et-grain* work, while the polished silver appearing through adds lustre and lightness. This depth of colour pleases the natives, as they take it to be owing to the large quantity of gold used on it, whereas a charge of the commonest gunpowder is sufficient to redden any quantity of the very slight gilding they receive. The poor silversmiths here are obliged to be rogues, whether they like it or no. I believe they make a tolerably good thing of their business, but it is entirely by appropriating a large proportion of both the gold and silver intrusted to them for work. The silver they receive is in Maria Theresa dollars: what they return is, I should think, scarcely so good as a Turkish piastre, and in fact contains scarcely one-third of silver, if so much. They, however, are sensible enough (was a Greek ever wanting in cunning?) to make the ornaments which are to be left plain silver of a far better quality than those gilt; for the purer the silver the more gold it requires to gild it, and the less durable the gilding. In the gilding also they make

a small profit. I have known a man to receive thirty Venetian sequins for a job, on which he employed only seven and a half. It is, perhaps, scarcely fair in me to "tell tales out of school," for I was for a considerable time employed with them, and in consequence acquired a knowledge of many of their secret goings-on. But, in truth, they are more to be pitied than blamed. They are considered almost in the light of slaves here; that is, they are not allowed to leave the country; and though treated with considerable kindness, and even some distinction, their supplies are neither over-plentiful nor very regularly paid.

To return to the ornaments. Some of the "bitoa" have the edges further ornamented with a number of small bell-pieces of silver, hung by little chains as a fringe. The "sórora," or "kíllitcha," is a sort of coronet, ornamented with stamped or *fil-et-grain* work, like the "bitoa," and having also a quantity of bells and chains of silver hanging over the ears and neck of the wearer. The "horn of victory," which Bruce describes, must be out of date altogether, as I have never seen it; and though I have taken particular pains to inquire, have never found any one who knew anything of it. The "tchouffa," or "disc of silver," as Bruce calls it, is still used, but is not considered fashionable, being confined almost entirely to the Agami and some other neighbouring tribes. This ornament, worn on the right arm above the elbow, is in the form of a quoit, but very large; and it may well be imagined how awkward such an appendage must be to the wearer, and how dangerous

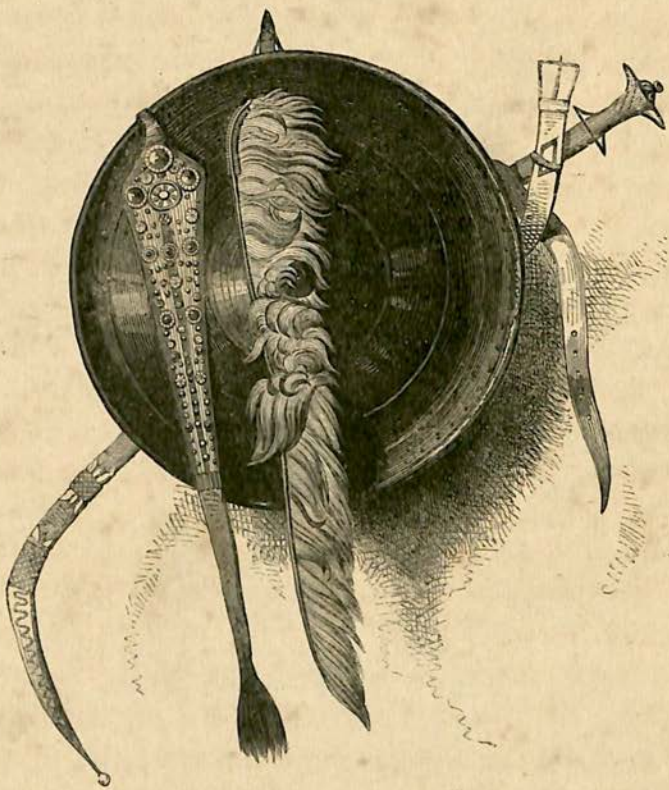
to him, if by ill luck he should chance to fall, either when walking or riding. The "sórora" may require thirty dollars; the "tchouffa" from thirty to forty; the "bitoa" from fifteen to twenty-five.

The sword, spear, and shield are essentially the weapons of the Abyssinians, firearms being only of comparatively recent introduction, and not generally used. The shields are round, and nearly a yard in diameter: they are very neatly made of buffalo's hide, and of the form most calculated to throw off a lance-point; namely, falling back gradually from the boss or centre (which protrudes) to the edges. At the centre, in the inside, is fixed a solid leather handle, by which the shield is held in the hand when fighting, or through which the arm is passed to the elbow, for convenience of carrying on a journey. The edge is perforated with a number of holes, through which leather loops are passed, and by these it is slung up in the houses. The face of the shield is often ornamented, in various ways, according to the wealth or fancy of the owner. Some have simply a narrow strip of lion's skin on each side of the boss, but crossing each other above and below it, the lower ends being allowed to hang at some length; others have a large broad strip of the mane down the centre of the shield, and hanging several inches below it. This is of course usually made of two or three pieces stitched together, as it would be difficult to get a single piece of sufficient length and beauty of fur. Others to this add a lion's paw or tail, fastened on the left side of the mane, and often highly adorned with silver. The beau-

tiful long black and white fur of a sort of monkey, called "goréza," occasionally supplies the place of that of the nobler yet scarcely so beautiful animal. A shield, almost completely covered with plates and bosses of silver, is usually the mark of the chief of some district. Those similarly plated in brass were likewise formerly used only by chiefs, though now they are carried by every soldier who can afford to buy them. The plated shield is called "tebbora." Those in brass are not much approved of, as they usually cover a bad skin: for a man possessed of a good handsome shield would never think of thus hiding its intrinsic beauties.

In former times a beautiful crooked knife was used in Tigrè, the sheath and handle of which were profusely enriched with silver and gilt. These, however, are never worn now. I have seen two or three in the possession of rich men and chiefs, to whom they have descended from their ancestors; but the long "shotel" in Tigrè, and the European-shaped sword among the Amhàra and most of the soldiers, have entirely superseded them.

The "shotel" is an awkward-looking weapon. Some, if straight, would be nearly four feet long: they are two-edged, and curved to a semicircle, like a reaper's sickle. They are principally used to strike the point downwards over the guard of an adversary, and for this the long curved shape is admirably adapted. It is, however, a very clumsy weapon to manage. The sheath is of red morocco leather, its point being often ornamented with a hollow silver ball, called "lǫmita," as large as a small apple. Many of



Shield with Lion's Mane and Tail, and Sword ornamented with Silver Plates.

the swords used are made in Europe, and are such as would be carried by the light cavalry, though lighter than ours. Being, however, cheap, showy articles, they are apt to break, and therefore the Abyssinians are getting tired of them, preferring those made of soft iron in their own country. These they make also with the faible considerably broader than the forte, to give force to the blow. Of course they bend on the least stress; but, in defence of this failing, their owners say that, if a sword breaks, who is to mend it?—while, if it bends, you have only to sit on it and it gets straight again. The handles of both this and the "shotel" are made of the horn of the rhinoceros. They are cut out of the horn at great loss of material, and hence they fetch a good price. It should be remembered that the heart of the horn is black, outside of which is a coating, not quite an inch thick, of a semi-transparent white colour. To make a sword-handle, a piece of horn of the requisite length is first sawn off. This is then re-sawn longitudinally into three pieces, of which the inner one only is eligible for handles. This piece is about an inch and a half thick, four or five inches broad at the broader extremity, and three at the narrower. As it lies sawn flat before us we can distinctly see the black stripe in the centre, with the white on each side. Next, a nearly semicircular piece is cut out at each side, leaving only four points of the white as four corners, and the grasp black. The handle is then finished, bored forthe shank of the blade, and polished. The shank is usually clinched over a half-dollar beaten convex: a *fil-et-grain* boss, called

"timbora," is, however, sometimes substituted. A sword-hilt thus made is obviously a very clumsy one to handle, as the points are parallel to the edge, and those farthest from the blade are longest. I should scarcely mind a blow from a sword thus mounted, as, were the striker to give his wrist any play, in order to make his cut at all effective, he could not fail sending one of these highly ornamental but very useless points into his own wrist. A handsome hilt, such as we have described, without the "timbora," might cost about ten dollars, or 2*l*., and from that down to 2*s*. The coating of some horns, instead of being white, is occasionally found to be of a bright blood-red, often marked in stripes. This, they say, is occasioned by the animal's having received a blow there. However it be, such horns are in Abyssinia considered valueless, while a Turk would give any price for them.

The sword is nearly always buckled on to the right side (according to European notions, the wrong one), some few gunners only wearing it on the left. The reason of this is, that in battle, when a man has thrown, or otherwise lost his lance, he would be obliged to uncover himself considerably in drawing his sword from across his body; whereas, by buckling it on the right side, he can avail himself of it without disturbing the position of his shield. Another reason is, that, when travelling, the left arm must, from the weight of the shield, keep swinging to and fro, and would thus be liable to meet the sharp points of the sword-hilt.

The spears used by most of the tribes inhabiting Eastern Africa are of rough construction: those of the

Abyssinians, however, are, for the most part, very neatly made, and often even tastefully ornamented. Their usual length is 6 feet 6 inches, including the staff; of this, perhaps 2 feet are head, and 6 inches butt. They use, however, lighter ones, principally for throwing; and now and then one meets with spear-heads much longer in proportion than those I have described. I had one, of which the head and staff were equal. Most good spears are four-cornered—either diamond-shaped (that is, broader than they are deep) or perfectly square: the latter are, however, not so common as the former. In either case they have the sides grooved from the neck to within a few inches of the point; partly for lightness, and partly for ornament. There is an old-fashioned kind of spear, called "hellas"—little used now-a-days except in some of the frontier districts: it is two to three inches broad, and perfectly flat, with the edges sharpened like a sword. The former kind is called "cutchin" (thin), and seldom exceeds an inch in breadth.

Many of the Abyssinians are tolerably expert in the use of the lighter sort of lance, or javelin, striking a mark from thirty to fifty yards distant with much precision. The late Nebrid Welda Selassy and Lickommenquos Desta were said to be able to throw a lance over the great tree and column at Axum. Some of the soldiers, especially horsemen, carry two spears when in action; one of which they throw from a distance, and retain the other in the hand for close encounter. The Abyssinians throw the lance with the hand raised as high as the shoulder; while the Turks seldom raise the

hand above the elbow when casting the "jerrid." In using the heavier spear, it is often allowed to slide through the hand as far as the butt, though never to leave the hand altogether. A good blow from a lance will, as I before said, sometimes pierce the toughest shield, and kill or wound the owner, if the shield be held square to receive the point: therefore an experienced soldier, skilful in the use of his arms, will always endeavour to receive it as obliquely as possible, and, if he can, will avoid the point altogether, allowing it to come very near, without actual contact, and then throwing it off by a quick movement of his shield, striking the lance's side instead of its point.

It will easily be understood that even at *armes blanches*, a European who knows anything of the use of a sword can, without difficulty, master the best Abyssinian, notwithstanding his large shield. A slight feint will open his guard, and then you have him at your mercy; for a shield is of considerable weight, and consequently not so manageable as a sword. The best way, as I have always found, is to make a feint at his head, which of course he will guard with his huge shield, thereby blindfolding his own eyes, while you have perfect leisure to amputate one or both of his naked legs, according to the strength and dexterity with which your blow shall be delivered. But if (for there is no rule without an exception) he should be too quick, or you too clumsy to succeed the first time in this manœuvre, repeat the feint; but, instead of aiming a second time at his legs, (for which he will be prepared), let your feint be only part of a double cut at his head, the second part

of which shall descend, with as much force as you can bestow, on his pericranium, at the very moment when he, anticipating a blow on his legs, shall have lowered his shield to protect them.

I have said nothing about the way in which the Abyssinian's blows are to be warded or avoided; for I take it for granted that any one would know how to manage that without my telling him. Suffice it to say, it is not difficult. I have had many a friendly bout with the natives—a Turkish pipe-stick being my weapon, against a long bamboo and shield; and I have always come off victorious, never finding a man who could in any way touch me. They have more than once challenged me to have a lance thrown at me from a distance. This, of course, was easier to evade than the other; but, not being understood by them, they considered me a sort of Admirable Crichton in swordsmanship. It is true, I used to be celebrated, as a boy, at singlesticks, and have taken lessons in fencing of Coulon, at Paris. The Abyssinians never objected to have a bout with me for a jar of "mése," knowing that the liquor was more frequently drunk by the vanquished than by the victor. A sword in the hand of an Abyssinian is almost useless, because he holds his shield before him with his left hand, and dares not to advance his right shoulder, lest he should uncover his body.

In the use of the gun the natives are in general exceedingly clumsy. They prefer large, heavy, matchlocks, to load which is a labour of some minutes. They carry their powder in hollow canes; and having no fixed charge, pour out at hazard a small quantity into the

hand. This they measure with the eye, occasionally putting back a little if it appears too much, or adding a little if it seems not enough. After this operation has been performed two or three times, till they are pretty well satisfied as to the quantity, it is poured into the gun-barrel. The proper charge is now tested by the insertion of the ramrod. Lastly, when all is settled, some rag and a small bar or ball of roughly-wrought iron are rammed down. This last operation (with the exception that the ramrod often sticks in the rag for half an hour) is not difficult, as the ball is made of about a quarter of an inch less diameter than the bore of the piece for which it is intended. It is great fun to see these gunners, when taken unawares by a sudden alarm: one can't find his flint, another has lost his steel; then there is the striking of a light, blowing the match, priming the gun, fixing the match to a proper length and direction; and, lastly, sticking into the ground the rest,* which nearly all of them use, especially if their piece be of the heavy description. There is one thing in their favour—that the mere sound of driving in the rest is generally sufficient to turn away the bravest Abyssinian cavalry that ever charged.

But while I have been describing the men, their dress and arms, a dozen or two of the fair sex have been waiting to have their portraits taken, or rather, that I should put a dress on to the naked description I have already given of their persons.

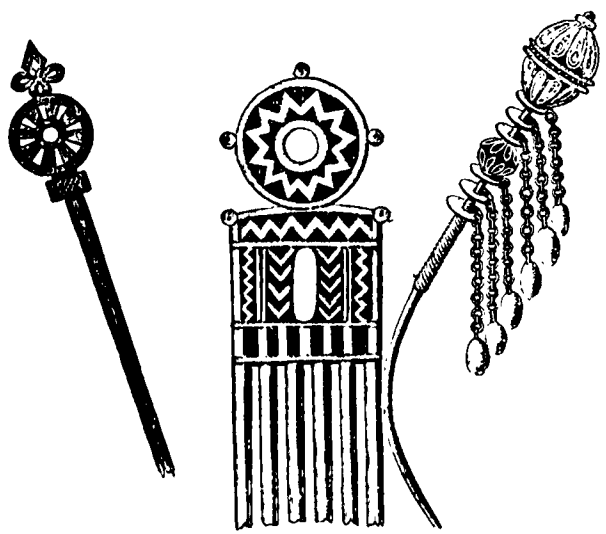
* The "rest" is a staff of male bamboo shod with an iron spike, and with two or three forks left to rest the barrel of a gun on for taking aim.

An Abyssinian Lady of Fashion.

The women of Abyssinia are dressed quite as decently as any women in the world, without having a particle of the trouble of the ladies of more civilized nations. There is a distinguishing costume for young girls, and for those who, from being married or otherwise, are no longer considered as such. The dress of the former is indeed rather slight, though far more picturesque than that of the latter. Down in our part of the country (about Shiré) the girls merely wear a piece of cotton stuff wrapped round the waist and hanging down almost to the knee, and another (or the end of the former if it be long enough) thrown over the left shoulder, so as to leave the right arm and breast exposed. In other parts of Tigrè a black goat-skin, ornamented with cowries, is often substituted for this latter. An ordinary woman wears a large loose shirt down to the feet, with sleeves made tight towards the wrist. This, with a "quarry" similar to those of the men, but worn rather differently, and a parasol when out of doors, is a complete suit. A fine lady, however, has a splendid "mergeff quarry," as before described, and her shirt is made probably of calico from Manchester, instead of the country fabric, and richly-embroidered in silk of divers colours and various patterns round the neck, down the front, and on the cuffs. She will also, of course, own a mule; and then may choose to wear (alas, that it should be so even in Abyssinia!) the inexpressibles. These are made of calico, and rather loose, but getting gradually tighter at the ankle, where they are embroidered like the shirt.

The fair sex all over the world are fond of ornaments.

In Abyssinia they wear a profusion of silver, in the shape of chains, bracelets, &c.; or, to be more explicit, a well-dressed lady will hang three or four sets of amulets about her neck, as well as her blue cord, and a large flat silver case (purporting to contain a talisman, but more often some scented cotton) ornamented with a lot of little bells hanging to the bottom edge of it, and the whole suspended by four chains of the same metal. Three pair of massive silver and gilt bracelets are on her wrists, and a similar number of "bangles" on her ankles; while over her insteps and to her heels are a quantity of little silver ornaments, strung like beads on a silk cord. Her fingers (even the upper joints) are covered with plain rings, often alternately of silver and silver-gilt; and a silver hair-pin, something similar



1, 2. Hair-pins made of hard wood, and stained with henna.
3. Ditto, of silver and gilt fil-et-grain work.
(About one half usual size.)

to those now worn by English ladies, completes her decoration. Women of the poorer class, and ladies on ordinary occasions, wear ivory or wooden pins neatly carved in various patterns, and stained red with henna-leaves. The Abyssinian ladies, like those of most Eastern nations, stain their hands and feet with henna, and darken their eyelids with antimony.

In general, neither sex wears any covering on the head, preferring to tress and butter that with which nature has provided them. The hair of the Abyssinians is admirably adapted for this purpose, being neither short and crisp like a negro's, nor yet of the soft elasticity of a European's, but between the two; sufficiently long to tress well, and even often to hang luxuriantly over the shoulders, but at the same time sufficiently woolly to prevent its being liable to come out of plait as soon as it is done, which ours always does. I had the greatest bother in the world with mine. In the first place, it required twice as much pulling as anybody else's, otherwise it would not have remained a moment in its place; and then it had to be tied at the ends and stuck with a "fixature" of boiled cotton-seeds; and after all, it never lasted in plait more than a week.

The operation of tressing is a very tedious one, usually occupying an hour or two per head; therefore, of course, it is repeated as seldom as possible: by some great dandies once a fortnight; by others once a month, or even less frequently. In the interim large supplies of fresh butter are employed, when obtainable, in order to prevent the chance of a settlement of vermin; and a piece of stick, like a skewer, is used for scratching.

The hair is gathered in plaits close over the whole surface of the head, the lines running fore and aft, and the ends hanging down in ringlets over the neck. In both sexes the patterns chosen are various. Some will have only five or seven plaits, while others will prefer as many as thirty or more. Some again have the whole of the head tressed backwards; others wear the front part plaited towards the sides, with the ends hanging over the temples. Formerly young soldiers were not allowed to tress their hair until they had killed a man, when they shaved the whole of the head, leaving only a single plait; another was added for each man killed, till they had reached the fifth, when they were privileged to wear a whole head of hair. Now-a-days, excepting in some of the remote Galla districts, the number of tresses depends on the age of the wearer rather than on his prowess. Youths and young women usually shave the crown, like a priest; while mothers and full-grown men tress the whole. Some ladies have their butter daubed on nicely, and then some scent; but the great "go" among the dandies is to appear in the morning with a huge pat of butter (about two ounces) placed on the top of the head, which, as it gradually melts in the sun, runs over the hair down the neck, over the forehead, and often into the eyes, thereby causing much smarting. This last ingression, however, the gentleman usually prevents by wiping his forehead frequently with his hand or the corner of his "quarry."

As may be imagined, the dresses neither of the women nor men are long free from grease; but this,

TATTOOED LADY.

especially among the latter sex, is of no importance: indeed, many young men among the soldiery consider a clean cloth as "slow," and appropriate only for a townsman or a woman. These never have their quarries washed from one St. John's day to another: even the young Prince Shétou is more often seen in a black quarry than a white one.

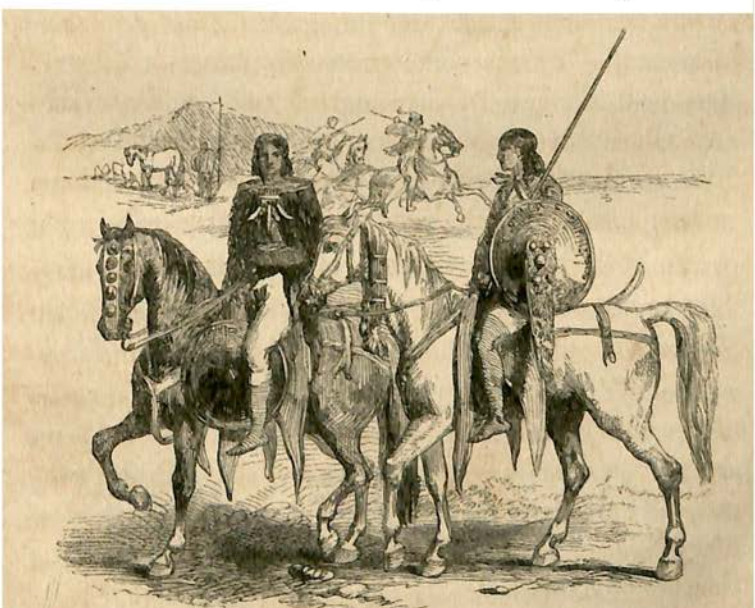
The Tigrèan ladies, and some men, tattoo themselves, though, as this mode of adorning the person is not common excepting among the inhabitants of the capital and persons who have passed some time there, I should judge it to be a fashion imported from the Amhára. The men seldom tattoo more than one ornament on the upper part of the arm, near the shoulder, while the women cover nearly the whole of their bodies with stars, lines, and crosses, often rather tastefully arranged. I may well say nearly the whole of their persons, for they mark the neck, shoulders, breasts, and arms, down to the fingers, which are enriched with lines to imitate rings, nearly to the nails. The feet, ankles, and calves of the legs, are similarly adorned, and even the gums are by some pricked entirely blue, while others have them striped alternately blue and the natural pink. To see some of their designs, one would give them credit for some skill in the handling their pencil; but, in fact, their system of drawing the pattern is purely mechanical. I had one arm adorned; a rather blind old woman was the artist; her implements consisted of a little pot of some sort of blacking, made, she told me, of charred herbs; a large home-made iron pin, about one-fourth of

an inch at the end of which was ground fine; a bit or two of hollow cane, and a piece of straw: the two last-named items were her substitutes for pencils. Her circles were made by dipping the end of a piece of cane of the required size into the blacking, and making its impression on the skin; while an end of the straw, bent to the proper length, and likewise blackened, marked all the lines, squares, diamonds, &c., which were to be of equal length. Her design being thus completed, she worked away on it with her pin, which she dug in as far as the thin part would enter, keeping the supply of blacking sufficient, and going over the same ground repeatedly to ensure regularity and unity in the lines. With some persons, the first effect of this tattooing is to produce a considerable amount of fever, from the irritation caused by the punctures; especially so with the ladies, from the extent of surface thus rendered sore. To allay this irritation they are generally obliged to remain for a few days in a case of vegetable matter, which is plastered all over them in the form of a sort of green poultice. A scab forms over the tattooing, which should not be picked off, but allowed to fall off of itself. When this disappears, the operation is complete, and the marks are indelible; nay, more, the Abyssinians declare that they may be traced on the person's bones even after death has bared them of their fleshy covering.

The extremities are the most neglected parts of an Abyssinian: his feet, like his head, are seldom covered. Great ladies, and some one or two elderly chiefs, wear a sort of clumsy shoe made of red or black leather, with

the toes very much turned back, like some of the Indians'. The shoes of the women are occasionally ornamented with silver. For the rest, a few merchants of Àdoua, principally Mussulmen, have learnt the use of sandals from their intercourse with the people of the coast; but these are worn only in the town, being considered as highly troublesome for the road.

While on the subject of dress, &c., I may as well advert to that of the mules and horses. Most men pretending to anything like gentility are possessed of one or other, or one of each of these animals. The horse is never used on the road, but led before his master, like the war-horse of an ancient knight, while the owner follows on an ambling mule. The price of a



Abyssinian Horsemen.

mule sometimes exceeds that of a horse. Dejatch Oubi had one that cost 120 dollars, or about 25*l*. The ordinary mule for carrying baggage costs at Adoua about 8 or 10 dollars, while a good ambler may be bought for about 30. In like manner, a horse may be bought for 5 or 6 dollars; a good one will cost 50 to 70; but the price rarely exceeds 100. The horse's head-stall is of white or red leather: a strap, ornamented with circular plates of brass, is placed down his forehead and nose, reaching from his forelock to his nostril. This appendage is called "bennitcha," or "mennitcha.' The plates gradually increase in size downwards, the smallest (which is the highest up on the string) being of the size of a crown-piece, or thereabout, while the one on the nose is perhaps three inches in diameter. Each of them has a brass spike protruding from its centre. The bridle is usually of round plaited leather, nearly an inch in diameter, and covered with scarlet cloth. Like many of the Oriental nations, the Abyssinians have no idea of handling the rein as we do, but merely guide or stop their horses by means of a small leather loop, fixed on the clumsy rein and through which the little finger is passed. The horse's throat is slung round with a set of eight fine copper chains (to which hangs a small bell), and occasionally with a broad set of leathern charms, alternately red and green. The saddles most esteemed are those made in some of the Galla countries. They are of wood, and covered with untanned leather. The pommel and cantle are very high, Arab fashion: the former is furnished with a large knob,

which, however, protrudes inwards instead of outwards, thereby endangering the stomach of an awkward rider. The saddle is covered with a shabracque of scarlet cloth, the swallow tails of which hang straight downwards till they nearly touch the ground. By way of stirrups, the Abyssinians use small iron rings, through which the great toe, or, at most, the two first toes, are passed.

The mule's furniture nearly resembles that of the horse: there is a slight difference in the shape of the saddle, and the shabracque is made of leather instead of cloth. Round the neck they wear a "soullissy," or band of leather thongs; to this, by means of small chains, are appended a large number of brass plates, the jingling of which makes a pretty noise when the animal is ambling. Rich persons have the shabracque embroidered in a sort of mosaic of different coloured leathers, in grotesque patterns of lions, men, &c. This is called "mergeff coratcha." The plates of the "soullissy," which is worn with this fancy saddle, are also much smaller and more numerous than those of an ordinary one. Some persons, great dandies, have their horses' furniture mounted in silver instead of brass; and the Empress Mennin has a mule's "soullissy" made of that metal. Neither horses nor mules are shod, although the country is in most places very rough and stony.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BIRTHS AND MARRIAGES.

IN the earlier chapters I have not only described a house, but furnished it, prepared food, and placed each servant at his particular avocation. Still the master is wanting; and no doubt all will allow him to be a rather essential part of the establishment. In order that my readers may feel sufficient interest in him, I will introduce them at his birth.

First, then, we will pay a visit to his respectable mother, whom we will imagine to be in so highly interesting a state that she has already made her calculation, and invited her neighbours and friends to assist her. All who are at liberty and sufficiently good-natured come at her bidding, and watch with her day and night till the critical moment arrives. We will suppose ourselves at the door at this time. The ladies of our party may walk in, but the gentlemen must remain outside, and be satisfied with what they can hereafter glean from the women, as to the events which may have taken place in the apartment. And this for two reasons: first, that it might be deemed improper for them to intrude at such a time; and secondly, because the room, and everything in it, is con-

sidered so utterly unclean, both at the moment of birth and afterwards till properly purified, that a man who should enter would be refused admittance to the church for forty days. I have, however, on this occasion, obtained the entrée as reporter.

The woman is seated nearly upright on two stones, a little separated one from the other. A female friend supports her, holding her shoulders, and keeps constantly calling to the Holy Virgin, and imploring her aid. The patient's feet are propped up on a chair or table, and held there by a woman, who occasionally rubs her feet and the calves of her legs, which form with her body an angle of about eighty degrees. As soon as the shoulders of the child appear the delivery is assisted by the women, and the infant is received into a flat wicker basket filled with flour. The child is immediately washed in cold water and perfumed, and a woman then moulds the head and the different features, by pressing them with her fingers, in order to make them handsome, while a man pokes a lance into his mouth, if a boy, to make him courageous. He does this through the window, most carefully avoiding entering the polluted chamber. At the same time a little boy cuts the throat of a fowl before the new-born babe, and the women fill the air with cries of exultation; repeating their cry twelve times if the infant be a male, and three times if a female. The women then all rush out into the court, singing and dancing like so many bacchanals: and woe betide the man who is unlucky enough to be caught by them; for they surround him,

and by their yelling, singing, dancing, and screaming, literally stupify him; nor do they let him go till he has promised them a ransom, either of beer or money, or some other kind of present. I remember once, when lodged at the house of a friend at Àdoua, I was awakened early in the morning, long before sunrise, and was requested, together with the master of the house, to leave the room, where we, women and all, had been sleeping. The women, however, it should be observed, were on the "medeb," behind the curtain. We tumbled out, half asleep, very cold and uncomfortable, and awaited the event outside, seated before a half-lighted fire, with plenty of smoke and little flame. Soon, however, a little squeak (only one) from the mother, and the "Zugarit" which followed from the women, proclaimed the successful delivery of a female child. I was congratulating the father, but he cut me short, telling me that the best thing we could do was to betake ourselves to the housetop, in order to keep out of the way of the women, who would no doubt immediately turn out in pursuit of us. We did so, followed by all the menservants; but scarcely half of us had time to escape before the women rushed out and succeeded in capturing a few of the men, each of whom gave something to be let off and then mounted to join us as spectators of the capture of visitors or others who might arrive to congratulate the father. These soon began to drop in, and among the first was a Greek tailor, Demetrius, who from having been a long time in the country was well acquainted with its customs, and was

not at all taken aback by the extraordinary reception he met with as soon as he entered the yard. Being moreover a jolly, good-natured old fellow, he danced, clapped his hands, and sang with them till he was tired, and then promising two jars of "tedge" was let off with a very good grace. Not so poor Michaël the silversmith, his fellow countryman; for he, when he found himself surrounded by thirty or forty harpies pulling him about in the queerest manner imaginable, became alarmed and did not know whether he ought to laugh, be angry, or frightened; so he tried a little of each by turns—swearing, laughing, and praying. After nearly dying with laughter at the droll figure he cut, we told him that he would be let off on payment of a ransom suitable to his dignity and wealth: so he tried to bargain for a jar of beer, which the women disdainfully refused; nor would they let him go till he pulled out a dollar, which we were all glad of, for he was rather a stingy fellow.

On these occasions the visitors congratulate the father, saying—"May your son (or daughter) be a joy to you!" "May God render you joyful!"—or other similar complimentary expressions.

Three days after the birth they go through a similar ceremony on the occasion of carrying the mother's clothes to a brook to be washed; and every male friend captured on the road is treated as we have just described. On the same day there is also a merrymaking in the house. The women all eat porridge, which has been the mother's food since the day of her delivery, and the

flour of which she prepared with her own hands before that event took place. The child is usually suckled by any woman who may happen to have milk, till the mother can take it herself; and butter, and sometimes even honey and milk, are crammed into its mouth. After eight days the child is circumcised, be it male or female, and on the tenth day, if it be a boy, or on the twentieth day, if a girl, the priests come with all the pomp and ceremony of the Church—crosses, incense, &c., and purify the house, sprinkling it with holy water. On the day of the child's birth the priest makes his calculation as to when it is to be baptized, informing the father (who probably cannot read, or, if he can, does not perhaps possess an almanac) of the particular day on which the ceremony must take place—forty days after the birth of a boy, and eighty after that of a girl. On inquiring why so long a time is allowed to elapse, and whether it might not be curtailed in case of sickness, I was informed that it might be shortened if absolutely necessary, and that the reason of the delay in ordinary cases is, that according to their traditions our first parents did not receive the Holy Spirit until they had been created that time respectively. The Abyssinians are, however, very particular that the exact day should be kept; so much so, that if the father miscalculates the day and is not forthcoming, he is subjected to a heavy penance. The priest would probably order him a year's fasting; but a trifling sum as a present to the Church (which means in fact a present to the priest) would readily induce him to commute the period to a month

or two. It sometimes happens that the priest himself miscalculates, and assigns a wrong day; in which case he has to undergo the penance that he would have inflicted on the father.

The parties having arrived at the church, the priest receives the child from the godfather, places his hand on its head, and pours on it a little water. He then takes oil, and signs the cross on the child's head, hands, breast, and knees, and concludes by tying round its neck a plaited cord of red, blue, and white silk, as a sign of Christianity. (This cord is afterwards exchanged for the blue one usually worn.) The priest then returns the infant to its godfather, exhorting him to support and educate it, and look after its welfare, spiritual and temporal, as though it were his own child. This the sponsor promises to do; but pays no more attention to his promise than do our good godfathers and godmothers in England; only, should he die childless, his godson is considered the lawful heir to his property. After the conclusion of the ceremony the priest returns with the whole party to the father's house, where a great feast is prepared in honour of the occasion.

The children are not much troubled with education. The sons, and sometimes even the daughters, of great men and priests are taught to read a little, and to repeat by heart a few chapters of the Psalms or other portions of the Scriptures; but as these are mostly in the "Geez" or ancient Æthiopic language (rarely intelligible except to men who profess something more than an ordinary education), so little do they learn that when obliged to

occupy themselves in the pursuits of life, upon which they usually enter at an early age, they seldom retain any vestiges of literary instruction. The children of the poorer classes have not the advantage of even these few mental acquirements. The boys are turned out wild to look after the sheep and cattle; and the girls from early childhood are sent to fetch water from the well or brook, first in a gourd, and afterwards in a jar proportioned to their strength. These occupations are not conducive to the morality of either sex. If the well be far from the village, the girls usually form parties to go thither, and amuse themselves on the road by singing sentimental or love songs, which not unfrequently verge upon the obscene, and indulge in conversation of a similar description; while, during their halt at the well for an hour or so, they engage in romps of all kinds, in which parties of the other sex frequently join. This early licence lays the foundation for the most corrupt habits, when at a later period they are sent to the woods to collect fuel. Besides these out-door avocations, the girls assist their mothers in domestic matters, such as grinding corn, cooking, &c.

Ladies of the higher classes seldom employ themselves except in spinning, which they do seated on the ground. In their left hand they hold the cotton, and in their right a bobbin, with which they gradually draw out the cotton to a regular thickness for a thread, then twist it by rubbing the bobbin on the bare thigh, and letting it spin for a moment: the thread is then wound on it, and a fresh one drawn out. In this manner thread is made

of various qualities, and is kept in hanks for weaving into quarries, common cloths, trousers, belts, &c. The weavers in Tigrè are chiefly Mussulmen, though some of them are Christians. They use a very rough kind of handloom, placed over a hole in the ground, like a saw-pit. The red border of the "quarry" is made out of a sort of coarse red cotton fabric, which is imported from India. It is unravelled, and the threads are rewoven into the "quarry." They call the red stuff "indikky," and prefer it to red thread, though the latter be of a superior quality.

In Abyssinia the young people begin to think of marriage at a very early age. I have seen brides of eight or nine years old; and boys at a proportionally youthful age are considered marriageable. When a lad wishes to marry, he only inquires for a girl who may possess twice the number of oxen that he can muster, or their value. His proposals are made to the girl's father, and, unless there is some strong motive for rejecting him, he is accepted, and everything is arranged without consulting the lady's taste or asking her consent. They are usually betrothed three or four months before marriage, during which time the bridegroom frequently visits his father-in-law elect, and occasionally propitiates him with presents of honey, butter, a sheep or goat; but he is never allowed to see his intended wife even for a moment, unless, by urgent entreaty or a handsome bribe, he induces some female friend of hers to arrange the matter, by procuring him a glance at his cruel fair one. For this purpose he conceals himself behind a

door or other convenient hiding-place, while the lady, on some pretext or other, is led past it. Should she, however, suspect a trick, and discover him, she would make a great uproar, cover her face, and, screaming, run away and hide herself, as though her sense of propriety were greatly offended by the intrusion; although previously to his making the offer she would have thought it no harm to romp with him, or any other male acquaintance, in the most free and easy manner. Even after she has been betrothed, she is at home to every one except to him who most sighs for the light of her countenance.

In Tigrè, and especially in Shirie, a superstitious belief is entertained, that if a girl leave her father's house during the interval between her betrothal and marriage she will be bitten by a snake.

When the wedding-day approaches, the girl is well washed, her hair combed and tressed, and she is rendered in every way as agreeable as possible. She has then to undergo a system of dietary, and to take medicine, for the purpose of obviating any inconvenience that might arise from the farinaceous food on which the people principally subsist. A day or two before that appointed for the marriage, a "dass" or bower is erected. It is made of a framework of stakes. The uprights are driven into the ground, and the horizontal stakes fastened to them by ligaments of bark or of supple shoots of trees, and covered with green branches to protect the interior from the sun. Of wet there is no fear, except in the season of the periodical rains. These bowers are

made large or small, according to the number of visitors likely to be assembled. All the friends who have been invited arrive in the course of the afternoon of the previous day; and if the wedding takes place in a town, a servant is usually sent to call the guests of distinction.

During my stay at Adoua I was invited to several weddings; among others, I was asked to the house of the Greek tailor, Demetrius, or "Seedy Petros," as he is more commonly called here, to assist at the marriage of his daughter by an Abyssinian woman to a man of the country. When the wedding takes place in a town, as was the case on this occasion, the crowd is excessive: invited or uninvited, everybody comes who has nothing better to do, or who is anxious to fill his stomach. A crowd of these hungry idlers congregate round the door, and often endeavour to force an entrance, where artifice or good words fail to procure it for them, and thus give a great deal of annoyance to the servants appointed to keep the doors. These, however, are assisted by a number of young men from among the neighbours and friends of the house, who on such occasions volunteer their services as "agafari" and waiters, or to make themselves generally useful. Several of these, armed like the doorkeepers with long wands, remain in the "dass" to keep order, to show people their places, and to make way for new-comers by dismissing old ones.

About two o'clock in the afternoon of the day preceding the wedding, "Seedy Petros" sent a servant to conduct me to the scene of festivity; but on our arrival at the front entrance we found the street completely blocked

up by the crowd, principally soldiers, who were endeavouring to force their way in, which, however, was prevented by barricading the gates and strongly guarding them. A back entrance in a by-street was now proposed by the servant who accompanied me, and thither we turned, but it was as well known to the mob as to us, and was quite as much beset as the front. The street, however, being narrower, the press outside was not so great, and the "agafâri" had more control over the ingress, being able to admit whom they chose, and to keep out intruders. It was not, however, till after nearly a quarter of an hour's fighting and squeezing that we succeeded in effecting an entrance. During the struggle I was amused with the contrivances which the mob had recourse to in the hope of passing in with me and my people. One fierce-looking soldier assisted me very much; for by striking some, and swearing at and threatening others, he succeeded in clearing a passage to the door. My people, however, were too well known for him to pass as one of them, and he was refused admittance till I, in consideration of his zeal, protested that, for that day, he was in my service. Another took me by the hand, and adjured me by the Virgin Mary, by St. Michael, and by the back of Oubi, that I should not let go his hand till he gave me permission, which he took care not to do till he was fairly inside. A third, who had an umbrella, walked close behind me, holding it over my head as if it belonged to me; and various other artifices were tried. At last we entered; but we found nearly as much difficulty in getting from the yard

into the "dass" as we had done in passing from the street into the yard—the crowd being almost as dense, and quite as unruly. The people who had fed, and those who had not, were mixed together; the former presenting themselves a second time for admittance, while many of those who had had nothing were refused entry by mistake. This gave rise to a terrible scene of confusion, quarrelling, and uproar; and we were glad to find that our worthy host had reserved a place where the whites were to be seated alone. We were seven in all:—Demetrius, the master of the feast; Michaël, an Albanian silversmith, who had run away from Khartom with a quantity of silver which had been given him to be worked; a Copt who had been servant to a priest; a man named "Welda Rafael," whose grandfather was an Armenian; Hajji Yohannes (who had been a coiner), also Armenian; and old Hajji Ali, who had been a servant of some of the Mamelukes, and had fled with them from Egypt. Such was our select party; and though most of them, from long residence in the country, must have been well accustomed to Abyssinian manners, yet each preferred a seat on the couch, anxious to arrogate to himself the superiority of white descent. One, however, called "Ingeder," son of a Greek named Apostoli, had been accustomed to eat raw beef from childhood, and preferred it and Abyssinian society to all such vain distinctions.

The Abyssinian guests were squatted round the tables in long rows, feeding as if their lives depended on the quantity they could devour, and washing it down

with floods of drink. I never could have believed that any people could take so much food; and certainly, if the reader wishes to see a curious exhibition in the feeding line, he has only to run over to Abyssinia, and be present at a wedding feast. Imagine two or three hundred half-naked men and women all in one room, eating and drinking in the way I have described in a former chapter, but with this difference—that the private party is well-ordered and arranged, while the public "hang-out" is a scene of the most terrible confusion. Here all decorum is lost sight of; and you see the waiters, each with a huge piece of raw beef in his hands, rushing frantically to and fro in his desire to satisfy the voracious appetites of the guests, who, as he comes within their reach, grasp the meat, and with their long crooked swords hack off a lump or strip, as the case may be, in their eagerness not to lose their share. One man was reported on this occasion to have eaten "tallak" and "tamash" of raw beef (each weighing from four to five pounds) and seven cakes of bread, and to have drunk twenty-six pints of beer and "tedge." From what I saw I can believe a good deal; but this appears rather a "stretcher." We of the Frank seat were presented with our share of the "broundo," &c.; but as our thoughtful host had informed us that a dinner, cooked by his own hands in the Turkish style, was awaiting us in an inner apartment, we merely, for formality's sake, tasted the offered delicacies, and then handed them over to our servants, who standing behind us were ready enough to make away with them. The silversmith,

Michaël, before coming to the feast, had, it would appear, been pouring a tolerably copious libation to some god or other, for he was considerably elevated, and being anxious to show off, commenced eating in the Abyssinian fashion, nor did he stop until he had cut a large gash in his nose.

It was amusing to watch the fights between the door-keepers and the mob, who were continually trying to force their way in before their turn. It could scarcely be said to have been a fair fight, as no one would think of returning a blow to one of these officers, whose persons are held sacred while in the performance of their duty. In fact, to strike a servant would be in such a case equivalent to striking his master. The doorkeepers, however, use no such ceremony; for not only do they strike on the shields, but even, when much pressed, give tolerably hard blows on the bodies of the intruders. As soon as one batch of guests were well fed they were turned out, neck and crop, to make way for another batch, who were equally roughly jammed and pushed into their places, taking their turn, when well filled, to be kicked out. This succession of feeding continued till near nightfall. We in the mean time had entered the inner room, and discussed some "kabàbs," a "pillaff," and sundry other Oriental preparations.

After this, the "dass" being cleared of all but a select party of the invited friends of the house, and their attendants, in all about a hundred persons, it was announced that the bride was to be presented to us. She was accordingly brought in, carried like a sack of flour

on the back of a male relative, who trotted in with her, preceded by a number of persons, each bearing a lighted taper, and followed by a crowd of women, who filled the air with their shrill cries of exultation. The bearer dropped his pack on a stool, in front of the place where we Franks and the elders were sitting, and she received the benediction of the party. Placing our hands on her head, one after the other, we each expressed some wish for her future welfare and happiness, and got our hands well greased for our pains. Music and dancing then began.

But before we proceed we will give some idea of the means and methods they possess in this land for cultivating the Muses. Their musical instruments are not of much variety, nor of great compass. The "negarit," or *big drums*, are used only by great chieftains of the highest rank. In Tigrè certain provinces give a right to the use of the "negari" to the chief who governs them. Oubi uses forty-four; each of his sons thirty-two; other chieftains sixteen or twenty. Minor governments use the "ambilta" and "cundan melakhat," and others the atter only. The "ambilta" are a set of five or six pipes, or fifes, blown like Pan pipes, except that each performer blows one only, every pipe having a different note, depending on the length or thickness of the instrument. They are played in turns, like the Russian horn-band, and produce a tune more or less resembling the chimes of village church bells, prettily executed. They are made of the "shamboko," a kind of hollow reed or bamboo. The "cundan melakhat"

consists of four long tubes made of cane hollowed, with a bell mouth and reed mouthpiece like a clarionet. Their note is harsh and disagreeable, and they are played in turns like the "ambilta," and always accompanied by a small drum. The instrument most commonly used by the people of the country, to give time to their dancing, or as an accompaniment to their songs, is the "cobero," which is a small drum, very similar to the Egyptian "darabouka," and, like it, is beaten with the hands: two or three of them are frequently played together. This instrument, it appears, is used by nearly all the nations of this part of Africa; but every country, and even tribe, has its peculiar way of striking it. They have also a sort of flute, which is blown from the thick end, and has four holes: and a kind of guitar or lyre, which they play as the Turks and Arabs do theirs—a bit of wood or horn, held in the right hand, being struck backwards and forwards across the strings, while with the fingers of the left hand they are touched guitar fashion, so as to produce the tune. The "cobero" is suspended by a strap to the shoulder of the player, who, standing up, marks the time by swinging his body to and fro with more or less grace, while the spectators stand in a ring, taking it in turns to dance. The commonest dance of Tigrè is a sort of chassée in a circle. They keep time to the music by shrugging their shoulders and working their elbows backwards and forwards. At certain parts of the dance they all squat down at once, shrugging away more furiously than before. At times, also, some clever dancer or danseuse

will execute a *pas seul:* or a *pas de deux* will be performed by two entering the circle together and throwing themselves backwards and forwards, and squatting, varied by other equally elegant attitudes, while the shrugging is never omitted. Some of the bystanders keep time by clapping their hands and singing; and the girls in the outer circle, crossing their arms over each other's shoulders, sway their bodies in a *really* very graceful manner.

This dance was now performed by the relations of the bride-elect; and, among them, her old mother, a shrivelled ugly piece of antiquity, actively capered about with a "makhombiya" (a straw dish-cover) as a hat, by way of distinction. This she occasionally took off, twirling it with her fingers over her head, with a most affected would-be-Taglioni sort of grimace. This continued for an hour or more, when the bride expressed her intention of also displaying her agility to the company.

Young women, when they dance, often wear for the occasion the "dino," or sheepskin, of the men. I had a very handsome one on that evening, and, taking it off, I begged the bride would deign to honour it by wearing it at her bridal dance. She accepted it with a smile of the utmost condescension: nay, were the truth known, it might have been of more than condescension. Poor girl! she was a most wretched victim of interested motives. The passions of her darker mother's race, combined with the Greek pride she derived from her father, must have rendered her marriage with an elderly

nigger not a little disagreeable. Thus much may be said for her husband, that he was a man of great experience, and quite capable of supplying the place of the father she was about to quit. He was forty-five years old, according to his own account, and quite as old as a man of sixty would be in England. She was a pretty child of twelve years only. He was, moreover, horribly ugly and disgustingly dirty. But all this was counterbalanced by the fact of his being the owner of twelve oxen, which was all that was required of him by his estimable stepfather.

Poor Fittick stood up, wearing my "dino," and, though evidently not in the merriest of moods, received, after she had gone her round once or twice, the merited or unmerited applause of all the company. An old gentleman, a would-be-young beau, a sort of Abyssinian pump-room dandy, followed her round in a very elegant manner, politely spreading his cloth over her on one side, as a screen at once from the dust and from the "evil-eye." They varied this dance with the "deball," a kind of war-dance, performed by the men only, with guns and spears; a description of which I shall have more leisure to give in the account of the next day's festivities. Thus they kept it up all night, "till daylight did appear," as the old song says; but I had long ere that time betaken myself to my peaceful dwelling.

While this merrymaking was going on at the bride's house, a similar entertainment was taking place at the bridegroom's, whose friends had also assembled; and in the forenoon of the following day, when we had all met

again in the "dass," he made his appearance. But as the manner in which he journeys from his own house to that of his bride is rather interesting, from the pomp and ceremony attending it, and as I myself had on more than one occasion formed one of a similar party, I will now for a moment leave the bride's family and friends waiting in the "dass," and accompany the bridegroom on his way thither.

Having kept up the dancing and jollification all night, the bridegroom (should the habitation of the bride be at some distance from his own) sets out at sunrise, followed by a host of friends and attendants, the number of whom it may be readily conceived does not much depend on any respect they feel for him personally, but is proportioned to the estimated generosity of his father-in-law elect, and to the quantity of bread, meat, and beer which they may calculate on finding prepared at his house. After him follow, first, his "arkees," who vary in number from six to twelve, according to the wealth and importance of the person. These "arkees" are chosen among themselves when boys. They agree, when playmates together, that when either of them marries they shall reciprocally act as "arkees," or brides*men*, to each other. Their office and duties will be more fully explained by and by. The whole party is well dressed: those who have no clothes, or bad clothes, borrow good ones for the occasion. He that owns a horse or mule mounts it: the others, but more especially the "arkees," who come out "heavy swells," borrow every article of finery they can possibly

lay eyes on, even to the silver amulets and chains belonging to the women of the neighbourhood. Behind the bridegroom is borne a handsome silver-mounted shield, probably belonging to his master, or some other great man who may have been kind enough to lend it to him for the occasion; and before him go a considerable number of men carrying guns, all borrowed; and perhaps the "ambilta" and "cundan" of the chief of his province are lent for the occasion, and played before him the whole length of the road. He himself mounts, perhaps for the first time in his life, a handsome mule, with its "mergeff coratcha" and "soulissy" (ornamented patchwork morocco leather saddle, and brass neck-ornaments), and, with his cloth affectedly placed over his nose, carries himself gallantly, and looks as proud as if he were a king's son, and as if the gunners, shield-bearers, mules, finery, and all really belonged to him; though perhaps only the day before he was toiling and cracking his whip behind his plough oxen.

When arrived near the bride's house, the nearest convenient plain is selected, and the horsemen of the party commence galloping about, the gunners fire off their matchlocks, and the lancers dash here and there, enacting altogether a sort of sham-fight. This, I suppose, is done to divert the bridegroom's mind, lest he should be nervous on first entering the "dass." Arrived at the bridal bower, he takes his seat on the post of honour prepared for him, which is a couch covered with a carpet and cushions, and a canopy of white calico spread over his head to keep the dust from falling on him

And there he sits in state; his nose and mouth covered with his garment to look dignified; while his master, or chief, is probably squatting on the ground at his feet, like a servant. He and his friends keep to one side of the house, the bride's family and friends remaining on the other side. The ceremonies, of course, commence as usual with a voracious devouring of raw meat and its accompaniments; after which, when all have well eaten and drunk, the place is cleared of strangers, and the bride is carried in as on the preceding evening, accompanied by tapers, &c. This time, however, she is covered with a large cloth, held over her like a pall, and, as before, is placed on a stool in front of the principal persons assembled. The bridegroom is then called, and asked if he wishes to marry her; to which he, of course, replies in the affirmative. They then crook their little fingers together under the cloth; nay, even sometimes I believe kiss each other: then certain wise admonitions are given to both by a priest, if there should happen to be one present, as well as by the elders in attendance; and the marriage settlement, or the agreement of what each of them is to bring, is entered upon. Here may be said to be the conclusion of the wedding ceremony—all that follows being as a mere flourish at the end.

Having satisfactorily arranged the business (which is not always an easy matter), the bridegroom takes his bride, and *sans cérémonie* turns her out, giving her into the charge of his friends outside the door: he then returns, and receives from his father-in-law the wedding

presents, which usually consist of a two-edged sword mounted in silver, a gun or two, a rug, some brass utensils, such as a ewer and basin, and other articles of furniture: all these are of course in proportion to the wealth and generosity of the donor.

During the whole of this scene the awkward shyness of Fittick's bridegroom was exceedingly ridiculous, and more especially so when he was called upon to join in the "deball" or war-dance. This dance is performed by men armed with shields and lances, who with bounds, feints, and springs, attack others armed with guns, so as to approach them, and at the same time avoid their fire, while the gunners make similar demonstrations, and at last fire off their guns either in the air or into the earth, and then, drawing their swords, flourish them about as a finish. Our poor hero, being a ploughman, had evidently more notion of whistling his oxen and cracking his whip than of using lances or shields, guns or swords, and had doubtless been getting up a little dexterity for the occasion by taking lessons; for seizing a large matchlock he made two or three passes to and fro, like a bear in a cage, and holding his gun at arm's length with both hands, as if afraid of it, at last fired it off in a hurry, and then, rushing forward to the place where his bride's female friends and relatives had collected, received from each a trifling present,—such as a piece of cotton stuff to make him breeches, a silver ring, or some such trifle; each of which articles he received in both hands, bowing his head. The "arkees," having for a short time danced with their companion the bride-

groom, rejoined the bride outside, and returned home in the same order of procession as that which was observed in the morning; the bride being mounted on a mule, with one of the "arkees" seated behind her on the crupper to prevent her falling off. When passing through a village on the road all the women of the place come out and greet them with their "ly, ly, ly's" of congratulation till they reach home.

Now for the bridesmen. They were made to promise under the cloth, after the man had accepted his bride, that they would faithfully and truly fulfil towards her the part of brethren: wait on her; should she hunger, furnish her with food; or should she thirst, with drink. But they have more than this to do. Three or four of them generally sleep in the same room with the newly-married couple, to furnish them with anything they may require during the night.* . . .

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A few days after the wedding, the bridesmen, dressing themselves up in all the ornaments they can collect, take a "cobero" or small drum, and go singing and dancing before every house in the neighbourhood. If in the vicinity of a large town, where there are many visits to make, their peregrinations occupy several days, or even a week or more. Every person they visit is expected to offer a present acccording to his circumstances. If, however, any one should be stingily dis-

* They have a variety of other interesting and curious little offices to perform, which it appears are considered as not quite fit to print in English.

posed, or by ill luck not at home, they forcibly enter the house and purloin anything they can lay hands on; such as sheep, goats, or fowls, which may be straying about the yards. Even in the public market-places and streets they perpetrate the most audacious robberies. Two of them disguised will approach the wares of some seller, while a third, profiting by the concealment afforded him by their long garments, which they purposely leave trailing on the ground, squats behind them. By pretending to bargain for some article or other they generally succeed in drawing off the attention of the vender from his property, who, being seated, naturally raises his eyes while talking to them; and their crouching confederate, watching his opportunity, purloins from beneath whatever he can lay hold of, and then makes quietly off. Nor do they scruple most cruelly to victimise even very poor people. Concealed in some nook or corner of one of the most frequented alleys leading to the market, they quietly watch till some country girl passes on her way thither, bearing on her head or shoulder, it may be, a piece of cotton cloth, the produce of some months' industry, when they suddenly spring out and snatch it from her from behind, and dodging round a corner run off as fast as their legs will carry them. In the absence of any other notification of it, you may always know when any great wedding has recently taken place by the lamentations of the women, who run about the streets proclaiming, to the great amusement of the by-standers, how they have been treated. No one attempts forcibly to recover any

article stolen from him, as such conduct would be in direct violation of the privileges of the "arkees," who, if questioned concerning a theft they may have perpetrated, do not scruple to assert their innocence with the most solemn oaths. I was once with some "arkees" whom I had seen kill and conceal a sheep, at the same time boasting how and from whom they had stolen it. On discovering the theft the proprietor immediately guessed who were the robbers; but on his coming to them to inquire they positively denied the fact, appealing to St. Michael as witness of their innocence; and on being further pressed, each of them took in his hand the "mateb" or blue cord which he wore round his neck as a sign of Christianity, adding, "as my future abode be in heaven," condemning himself to the other place should he lie. If any one but an "arkee" should thus perjure himself he would not only be considered a wretch unfit to associate with, but be liable to punishment for his crime. The bridesmen are, however, privileged persons, and when in office they may do anything without risking either their skins or their reputation. Notwithstanding, if a man miss anything, he has only to offer a small present as a ransom, and they are obliged in honour to restore the stolen property, whatever it may be: but to obviate this restitution, when any eatable live stock is stolen, it is immediately slaughtered and devoured, and the poor man goes back empty-handed.

The whole of the profits of these their begging visits and thefts are collected and handed over to the bride-

groom to compensate in some measure for the expense he is put to in supplying them with plenty of food and drink for three or four weeks, during the whole of which time they remain in the house, taking it by turns to watch, some of them always remaining near the bride, whom they endeavour to amuse and divert in every possible way, in order that she may not regret too much her temporary separation from her family.

Such are the civil marriages of Abyssinia; and they are by far the most usual. Church marriages are rarely solemnized except between persons who, having first been civilly married, and having afterwards lived happily together till the decline of life, begin to feel that they could not hope to suit themselves better, and so determine to sanctify the marriage by going to church and partaking of the sacrament. The bond is then considered indissoluble. The civil marriage, on the contrary, may be dissolved on the shortest notice, and for the most trifling reasons. Parties have only to express their wish to separate, and a division of property and children takes place. The boys, if there be any, usually go to the father, and the girls to the mother. This having been done, the parties are at liberty to contract a second marriage as soon as they please. It is not an uncommon thing for a man thus separated from his wife to maintain her in a house near his own, furnish her with the necessary means of subsistence for herself and family, and continue apparently in perfect friendship with her, but never approaching her as a husband, while at the same time he takes another bride in her place.

CHAPTER XXX.

DEATHS AND FUNERALS.

WHEN a person is dangerously ill and not expected to live, a priest is sent for, who, having heard his confession, absolves him, and administers the last Sacrament. The sick person is reminded that, although he need not consider himself dying, yet it is always well to be prepared for the worst, not only in his spiritual but also in his temporal affairs; and is exhorted to declare his last wishes with regard to the division of his property. These are not written, but simply declared in the presence of the priest and other witnesses. Should the sick man die, his funeral takes place the same day. All the priests from the neighbouring church assemble, and the relations of the deceased call from the house-tops and send messengers to the neighbouring villages, where, standing on eminences, they summon the neighbours by crying aloud, "Such a one, son, or daughter, of such a one, is dead. Come ye to the funeral, and bring the crosses and the incense bowls." The priests on their arrival commence chanting the prayers, while the spectators weep and wail. The body, having been properly washed and laid out, is wrapped in a cotton shroud, with the face covered. It is then placed on a

couch, upon which it is to be carried to the burial-place; but before the procession is formed the body is removed to the outside of the door, and, on being again raised on the shoulders of the bearers, every one present who has a gun discharges it as a salute. The funeral train then sets out, the friends of the deceased who accompany it wailing and violently rubbing their foreheads and faces with the borders of their garments held in both hands. On its way to the church the procession makes seven halts, at each of which incense is burned over the body, and the priests and scribes read and pray. The service comprises the whole of the Psalms, which are read very quickly, a great number of the scribes as well as priests being present; to each of these is allotted a psalm or two, and they all read their respective parts at the same time. In Abyssinia they have a hundred and fifty-one psalms, the extra one being merely a private history of David's youth, which it would appear we do not allow to be authentic. Besides the Psalms they read certain portions of the New Testament. The seventh halt is made at the church gate. Should, however, the dead person's house be near the church, five of the services are read previously to starting, and only the remaining two on the road. The mourners usually take care to have among their party some friend learned in such matters, to prevent their being cheated out of any part of the reading. The corpse is carried by the friends in turn. On entering the church another long service for the dead is performed, at the conclusion of which the priests wrap the body in a mat, made of the leaves of

the date-palm, as symbolical of the branches of the palm which were spread before our Saviour on his entering into Jerusalem—death being considered as the entry of the Christian to the spiritual Jerusalem.

Many Abyssinians, during their lifetime, wear round their necks a set of amulets, among which is sometimes one consisting of a strip of parchment nearly six feet long, which is rolled up and fitted into a case of morocco leather. On its whole length is written a legend, illustrated with representations of the Virgin and Saints, which relates that, when the blessed Virgin Mary was in heaven, she remarked that no great people, such as kings, priests, &c.—those, in fact, who when on earth were most esteemed and exalted—obtained admission there. Being grieved at this, she inquired of our LORD, "Who then shall be saved?" And He, for her sake, conceded that all such as prayed through her intercession should obtain salvation. After death these amulets are unrolled, and laid out along the whole length of the corpse. Amulets, however, are not at all encouraged by the more respectable priests, as they form no part of the religion, but are only catchpennies sold to the superstitious by certain of the "defterers" or scribes, who by some are regarded as impostors, and by others as having dealings with the devil.

While the service has been going on in the church the grave has been prepared. In Abyssinia there are no regular grave-diggers; but any one present assists, it being considered a meritorious act of charity to bury the dead. When the grave is ready, the priest descends

into it, and perfumes it with incense: the body is then lowered into it. If the deceased be of a wealthy family, masses, with the Sacrament, are performed for his soul daily, for the first forty days after his death; but if his relations be poor, five masses during the same space of time are considered sufficient. These are performed on the third, seventh, twelfth, thirtieth, and fortieth days. For all deceased persons a mass is performed once a year, on the anniversary of the death. The weeping we have described is but of short duration; for the interval between the death and burial is so brief that it would be impossible for the friends and relations of the deceased who live at a distance to assemble for the occasion; so the third day is appointed for the mourning. Early in the morning of that day the relations of the deceased repair to some grassy spot convenient for their friends to meet, and as near the church as possible. At Àdoua the market-place is chosen for the purpose. They seat themselves near a couch, on which is laid an artificial figure, to represent a corpse, frequently made of cushions, and covered with a white garment; and the friends as they arrive approach and form a line near it. Those who have guns discharge them in the air, while the rest, bowing their heads forward, remain for a few moments weeping and rubbing their faces on each side with their garments. The nearer relatives of the dead, both male and female, shave their heads on this occasion, and rub themselves so severely on the forehead and temples as to abrade the skin completely, and produce a sore which takes a long time to cure; and even when

healed, the part remains for some time as white as a European's skin. By degrees, however, it assumes a darker colour, and at last becomes even blacker than the rest of the face; but in all cases a mark is apparent for several years, and frequently for life. This custom is almost exclusively confined to the inhabitants of Tigrè and other provinces east of the Taccazy. I have heard that such practices are considered unlawful by the Amhàra people, and consequently but little adopted. Professional singing women frequently attend the funeral meetings of great people, and sometimes get a handsome present as a reward for their services; but many go in the hope of getting well fed at the feasting which takes place after the ceremony. Each person in wailing takes it by turn to improvise some verses in praise of the deceased. For example, a son or daughter will exclaim, "Oh! my father, who fed and clothed me, whom have I now to supply your place!" and other similar expressions; while his friends or relations will call him "Brother," and his wife or servants "Master," each speaking of him according to the degree of relationship which existed between them. The professional singers will give minute details of the history of his ancestry, his deeds, character, and even his property; and this to a great length, thus:—"Oh! Gabrou, son of Welda Mousa, grandson of Ita Garra Raphäel, &c. &c., rider of the bay horse with white feet and of the grey ambling mule, owner of the Damascus barrel-gun ('baaly johar'), and bearer of the silver-mounted shield, why have you left us?" &c.; entering with astonishing

readiness into every particular of the deceased's life and actions; while the by-standers, at the end of each verse, break in with a chorus of sobbing lamentation, adapted to a mournful chant,—"Wai! wai! wai! wailayay; wailay, wailayay!" &c.—which has a pretty plaintive sound, especially when, as is usually the case, a number of soft female voices join in. The "ambilta" and "cundan" keep time with them, and add not a little to the effect. This continues till all the expected friends have arrived and had their fill of wailing; and about noon the whole party retire to the house, where the cow is killed and a quantity of provision provided for those who have come from a distance. Everything except the cow is usually furnished by the neighbours, as the mourners are supposed to be so overwhelmed with grief as to be unable to attend to such preparations.

The price of the forty days' masses is bargained for by the priests: it usually amounts to from six to twelve dollars, or more, according to the wealth of the family. At certain periods also they expect to be fed by their employers, who on the thirtieth day have to send them an abundance of provision, including a sheep; on the fortieth day one or two cows, as well as various other things, are prepared for them and the scribes; and on the eightieth day they feast, and at night perform mass. If the family have cash enough in hand, the "teskar," or wake, is held about six months after the funeral; but if, as is often the case, they are short of the "indispensable" for the moment, this ceremony can be postponed to any more convenient time. This is merely a "blow-out" by

way of a finish. It is given to the priests and any others who may come; and if it be to the memory of an important personage, it will sometimes last for seven days or more. On the first day the priests come from all the neighbouring churches, sometimes including those of thirty or forty parishes. They all assemble in the church where the person is buried, and have prayers: after which they at once proceed to the feast; but before any one of them can taste a morsel, the "haioh," which is the feeding of the numerous poor who may be congregated outside the gates, must take place. On such occasions these poor people never allow any one to eat till after they have been served. With loud voices they adjure the assembly, for the sake of the SAVIOUR or one of the saints, not to commence eating till they shall have first had their perquisite. A man then counts them, tapping each on the head with a stick; and to every one of them is handed a bit of the entrails, liver, or meat, rolled up in a cake of bread. When all have been served they hold their portions in both hands under their mouths, and then shout "Hai—oh!" with a long *sostenuto* on the last note. Liberally translated, this would express a prayer for the resurrection of the dead to a new and better life. This part of the ceremony is very important. Few persons would dare to neglect it, or to hazard the maledictions of the assembled poor by treating their importunities in any way harshly, as such conduct would be a perpetual reproach and a lasting source of annoyance to him who might be guilty of it; for should he after such behaviour have the misfortune

to quarrel with any acquaintance, or other person to whom the fact was known, he would be immediately accosted with, "Are you not the man who made no hai—oh for his father or relative?"

On the second day the great men of the neighbourhood assemble, and the priests of the church where the deceased was buried are alone invited to meet them. The rank of each day's guests decreases by gradation until the seventh day, which is set aside for the women only. On these, as on all festive occasions in Abyssinia, the convives get excessively intoxicated, and frequent quarrels ensue: nor is this confined to the soldiery or other laymen, but is, I fear, very common among the "defterers" or scribes, and not infrequent even among the priests. The scribes are indeed a notoriously drunken, noisy set: their song, "Bring drink, and we 'll dance for ever," is heard even in the most sacred places, and on the most solemn occasions. Among the poorer class the "teskar" is brought to a conclusion in a shorter time, although they invariably keep it up as long as they can afford to do so. Three "dasses" or booths are sometimes erected: one is kept for the great people and the priests, another for the mixed mob, and a third for the women. Thus the whole affair is finished in one day. This is doing it economically. Others prolong it to two or three days. Food is prepared for the priests on every anniversary of the festival.

One thing with reference to burials has yet to be mentioned: there is no doubt that many unfortunate

wretches are buried alive in Abyssinia, owing to the extreme ignorance of the natives on all subjects connected with medicine, and from the fact that they are never kept above ground more than twelve or fourteen hours after they are supposed to be dead. I have been told that it sometimes happens that during a funeral, noises, as of groans, &c., are heard in the tomb, which are always attributed to the "Booda" or Evil Spirit making off with the body; and no one would think of reopening the grave to examine it. Another piece of folly, of which Abyssians are often guilty, is that of coming and howling at the bedside of a sick relative. A servant of mine was once dangerously ill, of which, however, I was not aware, no one having intimated to me the extent of his complaint; and as they seemed to prefer doctoring him themselves, I had only inquired after him casually when passing his hut, thinking that little was the matter, till one day I was astounded on hearing the death-wail raised where he was lying. On immediately hastening to see what was the matter, I found that though he was seriously ill he was neither dead nor dying. The effects of a violent fever had rendered his head shaky; and, though not delirious, he was wandering, and when I spoke to him he muttered something, of which the only intelligible word was "death." To afford him momentary relief I had him sponged all over, and gave him some medicine; after which he became a little more sensible, but still continued to speak of his death. I expostulated with his father about the wailing, and on his ordering the women off I went and sat with

the lad, and by keeping him cool and easy by sponging, and continuing to talk to him cheerfully, I at last persuaded him that there was nothing seriously the matter. The result was, that he gradually got better; though I firmly believe, that, had the women been allowed to have their way, they would literally have howled him to death.

CHAPTER XXXI.

RELIGION, ETC.

CHRISTIANITY is the prevailing religion of Abyssinia, being professed by the majority of the population, as well as by the reigning princes of the different states. There are, nevertheless, scattered through the country, many Mohammedans, and some Falashas, or Jews. The former are mostly descendants of families who adopted that religion in the early times of Islamism, when the Christians of Æthiopia were surrounded and often overpowered by the victorious followers of the false prophet. Some, however, trace their origin from settlers either from the Mussulman Galla, or other neighbouring tribes, or from the Arabs; and some few, again, are men who, having left their country for a time on commercial speculations, or from other motives, have been seduced from the faith of their fathers. Mohammedans are to be found in almost every town of Abyssinia. They are for the most part employed in commerce, the manufacture of cotton cloths, and such like. Few of them are soldiers, they being esteemed by the Christians as cowardly and effeminate.

The Jews of Abyssinia are less numerous than the Mohammedans, and confine themselves principally to

certain districts. They retain the ancient religion of the country before the introduction of Christianity.

The Gospel was introduced into Abyssinia by Frumentius, about the year of our Lord 330. Previously to this date it is probable that no attempt had been made towards the conversion of Abyssinia; although by some it is asserted that such an attempt was made by the eunuch of Queen Candace, whom Philip baptized; while others pretend that St. Matthew and St. Bartholomew actually visited the country. Some even go so far as to assert that the Virgin Mary herself, with the child Jesus, came into Abyssinia when she fled to Egypt, and show a place in a high mountain which is called her throne or seat.

In matter of profession, no nation is more loudly Christian than the Abyssinians. Bigoted and prejudiced in the extreme, they will not eat of the meat slaughtered by any one but a Christian. They are extremely superstitious in their belief of miracles and the interposition of the saints, the names of some of whom are continually in their mouths. Their fasts are more numerous perhaps than those of any other Christian people, more than two-thirds of the year being assigned to abstinence. Nor in their fasting do they get off as easily as Roman Catholics; for it is not sufficient that they should abstain from animal food only; an Abyssinian, during fast-time, neither eats nor drinks anything till late in the afternoon; and this, as may be imagined, is a severe mortification of the flesh in a hot and enervating climate. It is true

the Mohammedans do nearly the same during their month of Ramadan; but they only change the day into night, feasting during the night-time on more luxurious food than many of them could allow themselves during the remainder of the year; while the Abyssinian, when he does eat, confines himself to dried peas, dressed in a sort of bad oil, or to an equally unpalatable dish made of a kind of spinach, called "hamly" or "goummen." This oil is called "kivvy nyhoke," after the plant "nyhoke," from the seeds of which it is extracted. The plant bears an orange flower, and the seeds have some resemblance to linseed. The oil is of a very drying property, almost like varnish, and is not only exceedingly strong and unpleasant to the taste, but also proves to some people so unwholesome, that the Roman Catholic missionaries obtained a dispensation to cook their food in butter on fast-days, some of them having suffered severely from the use of this oil.

Many of the Abyssinian fasts are of long duration. The time of day when the people may eat is determined by the length of a man's shadow, measured by his own feet, and varies in different fasts. Thus, the fast of Advent is during the last ten days of the month Hedar (October) and the whole of Tahsas (November), and during each day till a man's shadow measure nine and a half feet.

The fast of Gahad, on Epiphany eve, till sunset.

The fast of Jonah, during three days, till the shadow is ten feet.

The fast of Lent, during fifty-five days, till sunset.

The fast of the Apostles varies from ten to forty days, till the shadow is nine feet.

The fast of the Holy Virgin, for sixteen days, till the shadow is nine feet.

In all, taking the fast of the Apostles at forty days, 154 days.

Besides these are the Wednesdays and Fridays, making nearly 260 days of fasting, and doubtless many occasional ones, ordered by the confessor, as penance for some fault committed. During the long fast-time, however, they are allowed on Saturdays and Sundays to eat in the morning, but of course nothing containing animal food.

Some of the priests are very rigorous in keeping all these fasts, and many even voluntarily add a number for their own observance. The people, too, in general are tolerably attentive to this duty; and I have frequently met with men undergoing extreme labour, yet still persevering in what they have been brought up to consider as one of the most essential parts of their religion; for, strictly speaking, a man who has been known to neglect the rules of the Church is looked upon almost as an infidel, and, should he die in such a state of disobedience, his body would be refused sepulture in the churches. Good Friday and the following day are passed by the priests and the rigidly devout in an absolute fast of forty-eight hours.

If the Abyssinians fast two-thirds of the year, they make up for it in some degree by the number of feasts which they celebrate. As the traditional and other

customs on some of these occasions are very singular, and frequently amusing, I will mention a few of the principal ones.

Holy Thursday is a sort of general picnic-day. It is passed entirely out of doors. No one eats bread; but they take Indian corn, millet, dried peas, &c.—in fact, a little of every variety of corn they may possess—and mix them all together. The mixture is then put into a wooden mortar, called "fandouk," beaten till the skins come off, and then boiled in an earthen pot. The whole proceeding of peeling, cooking, and eating, is performed out of doors, no one entering the house on that day. A portion of the food is put aside till the morrow.

On the morning of Good Friday all the little boys and girls of the neighbourhood go round, and knocking at the door of each house demand food, calling out, "Mishàmisho, mishàmisho! May God give ye cattle in your yard, and children to your bosom: and may those you have already grow up in health and strength." Every one thus appealed to gives them something; but they make a point of being as grasping and impertinent as they possibly can, each one vying with the other in his endeavours to obtain by importunity as great a variety and quantity of food as possible; and they will not be induced to go away satisfied as long as you will remain and argue with them. Thus, if you give them bread, they thank you, but remark that they cannot eat it dry. You give them a dish of cookery: they ask for pepper, then salt, onions, beer, mead,—in fact,

everything they can possibly think of. But as this is done partly as a custom, and partly for the sake of amusing themselves at your expense, the best plan you can adopt is to enter your house and shut the door. After they have gone their rounds they take the collected food, and, retiring to some snug corner in the country, eat, and amuse themselves, much after the manner of English people at a picnic party. But woe to the man who dares refuse to treat them according to their perquisite on this their own privileged day. Should any one have behaved stingily, they make a sham corpse of a bundle of clothes, and, placing it on a couch, carry it in procession through the town; part of the boys dressed up as priests, and the remainder of the troop following as mourners. As they go along, imitating in every point a real funeral, they wail and cry out "Wai, wai, wai! Mr. Such-a-one, son of Mr. So-and-so, is dead. Alas, the great, the good, the generous man!"—and so on; and when they are tired of walking about they go and make a grave near some of the most frequented thoroughfares in the place, and, sitting round it, lament in like manner; and the passers-by are of course mightily amused at the sport thus made of their stingy neighbour; and the news, being told all over the place, becomes a sore subject to the object of it.

On the anniversary of one of their Abyssinian saints, called Gabro Menfus Kouddos (slave of the Holy Spirit), everybody eats vetch peas, which have been made to sprout by soaking them for three days in water.

Portions of these peas are sent about as presents among friends and neighbours. I never could satisfy myself as to the origin of this custom. Some people have told me that the sprouts represented the saint's beard, which was white and very long;—others, that they merely referred to his having passed the greater portion of his life in the woods, when he lived on roots and berries in every stage of vegetation.

On the morning of St. John's day a number of people, your servants or friends, present to you a bunch of wild flowers, at the same time saying, "Inkoutatash" (Take this present): the word, however, is not used on presenting any other sort of gift. This day is regarded in Abyssinia much as our New Year's day. It is about the time when Nature seems to burst anew into life. The rainy season being over, the corn is springing up, the trees are in bloom; even the birds are decked out in their brightest plumage, which, as the season advances, they lose, and recover only with the rains. Thus, the little scarlet and black cardinals, which in this spring-time of Abyssinia, and in the succeeding months of corn-time and harvest, are to be seen everywhere hovering like little balls of fire over the millet-fields, in winter drop their brilliant colours, and assume a more quiet costume, nearly resembling that of our common English sparrow.

The nosegay presented on St. John's day is a sort of offering of the first fruits, to remind the receiver of the beautiful season that is setting in. In Abyssinia the bearer of good news is always rewarded with a gift;

and this token of the new year, being considered as such, generally elicits a gift in return. Among equals, every one strives to rise earliest in the morning, and to be the first to offer his bouquet to his friend, who then has to give him a present according to his means. Inferiors also give flowers to their superiors; and in a great man's house there is a good deal of rivalry among the servants as to who shall be the first to wish him many happy returns of the day, for only the two or three earliest comers are usually rewarded. Ladies generally prepare a new pair of breeches for their husbands, spun with their own hands, which they offer when he presents his nosegay; while he in return gives them a new dress. So the master with his inexpressibles, the mistress with her calico shirts, and the servants with their presents, are all joyous: in fact, all the house is happy; and with a few exceptions, such as where there is sickness, much innocent pleasure and gaiety are I believe enjoyed by all classes in this country on the anniversary of Kouddos Yohannes.

But not only is it celebrated as a day of festivity and merrymaking; the friends of persons possessed of the devil—(which malady will be described hereafter under its various denominations of bouda and tigritiya), who have tried all the usual remedies without the sufferer's being benefited by them—await the arrival of this anniversary, as their last and most likely chance of success. The patient is taken into the country and placed at a point where two roads cross each other; then, according as they may have received instructions from the

wise, a white or a red sheep is dragged three times round him, and afterwards slaughtered "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The sign of the cross is then marked on the patient's forehead with the blood of the victim, which is left where it was killed, and the whole party returns homeward, being careful on no account to look back towards the sheep, lest by so doing they should disturb the devil, who is supposed to have left the man, and to be busy in eating the mutton.

But more than this, St. John's is the only cleanly day in the calendar; for in the evening the whole population, male and female, old and young, go down to the neighbouring stream and bathe. It is a fact that, excepting on this occasion, there are many of the number who, beyond washing their hands before and after meals, and their feet after a journey, never trouble the water from one year's end to another. My habit of washing every day in the European fashion gave rise to much scandal on my first arrival; and it was constantly inquired, "Is he a Mussulman, that he thus washes, and so often?" Of a truth, Christianity is but a dirty religion in Abyssinia.

As we have already stated while speaking of the fasts, the day before the Epiphany is passed by the priests and other devout men in abstinence until sunset. During the afternoon the Holy Sacrament is administered to the priests only, in their churches. After the conclusion of the ceremony they form in procession, and, accompanied by the defterers or scribes, and bear-

ing with them all the church paraphernalia, go down to the neighbouring rivulet. Tents are pitched near its banks, ready to receive them, and there is a store of comestibles of every variety, with, of course, the usual large proportion of beer and honey-mead; the whole of which good things are from the voluntary contributions of the devout of the parish.

When the much-wished-for sunset has arrived the feasting begins, and it is fearful to behold with what vigour the half-famished divines set to work. There is an abundance for them; for the food being begged as a supply for the ark, or tabóte, the superstitious people think that they are doing a very godly act in providing vast quantities, while in reality the only result is, that the priests make beasts of themselves. The whole night is often passed in alternate prayer, singing, dancing, and drinking. The songs and dance are both of a religious kind: the latter, probably taken from the religious dancing of the Israelites, frequently mentioned in the Bible, is merely a peculiar sort of shrugging of the body and stamping with the feet. The end of these devotional orgies is the administration of the sacrament before sunrise; but it not unfrequently happens that long before that time many of the priests are not in a very fit state to partake of it, disgraceful scenes of drunkenness often disturbing these religious festivals. During the evening of timkàt, or the Epiphany, that I passed at Àdoua several of the holy priests were found to have tumbled into the neighbouring brook, Assam, overcome, as charitably-disposed persons may have said, by their

religious fervour; though some sinful scoffers—myself included, I fear—suggested that liquor might have been the cause of their overthrow.

After the sacrament has been distributed among the priests, the chief priest, raising his hands over the stream, blesses it, and then the people bathe in it. Great men, however, and priests, are sprinkled, to obviate the necessity of their mixing, even in such a ceremony, with the vulgar herd. After this the women dance and sing, and the men engage in various sports; those who are mounted playing at "goux," which is a sort of tournament, like the Turkish jerrid play, wherein the warriors engaged ride after each other, throwing staves and warding off blows in mimic fight; now pursuing, now retreating. It is a lively and very exciting pastime; and I wonder that something of the kind has never been introduced into our sport-loving and horse-fancying country, to make up for the loss of the lists and other equestrian exercises.

While the horsemen are thus engaged, the pedestrians, divided by parishes, play at "hocky," in precisely the same manner as we do in England. At Adoua the goals are the churches of St. Michael and St. Gabriel, past which each party strives to drive the ball. They play with clubs with large heads and a wooden ball. When the game is ended the victorious party dance, and sing a sort of war-chant, "Aho, aho, ahai, ahai, ahai."

All these scenes are very wild and interesting. I know nothing more agreeable than to see a large number of savages engaged in their sports or dances. The more

thoroughly savage the actors are, the more diverting the scene, from the characteristic wildness of their gestures. Some of the dances of the slave countries are worth all the Giselles and Sylphides that ever appeared on the boards of an opera-house.

Their sports terminated, each parish follows its respective priests, who proceed to their church, carrying with them the ark with the ten commandments and the Host. The ark is borne on the head of a priest, shaded by a canopy carried tentwise over it, and so sacred is it considered that no ordinary person may approach it, much less touch it. The holy utensils being deposited in the churches, the people retire to their houses, and pass the remainder of the day in feasting and merrymaking.

The following day is the celebration of the marriage in Cana of Galilee, and also of the feast of St. Michael the Archangel. This day is looked upon by the Abyssinians as one of the greatest of all their festivals, from the importance of their patron saint. In the churches the greatest ceremonies are performed, and there is feasting in the houses of the wealthy. Some little is, indeed, done by every one, whether poor or rich, as in Abyssinia all classes are delighted at the excuse afforded them by holy feast-days of making for themselves a day of jollification, and too often of excess and debauchery. The priests, too, are by no means unwilling that the observance of these holydays should be strictly attended to, because on all these occasions they are well fed by their devout parishioners.

Many of the people make vows to their respective patron saint, to slaughter on his anniversary a bullock, sheep, or other votive offering, in order to conciliate his protection and favour for the remainder of the year. Each family has its patron saint, whose anniversary is handed down from father to son as the family jubilee. On this day the different members of the family do their best to entertain their friends by some sort of merry-making, every man according to his means. Even servants consider it necessary, in some manner, to celebrate among themselves the holyday of their forefathers. St. Michael is much in vogue as a patron. Besides him are the Virgin, St. John the Baptist, Tekla Haimanout, Gabro Menfos Kouddos, and others.

A few days after St. Michael's is the anniversary of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin. The priests congregate in the churches dedicated to her, and celebrate the event by some prayer and much feasting.

Liddet, or Christmas-day, is, as in every Christian country, a great jubilee; but its observance in Abyssinia is marked by nothing beyond the usual amount of praying, singing, dancing, and feasting.

Of all their feasts, that of Mascal, or the Cross, is the one which is celebrated with the greatest amount of pomp and outward show. During the whole of the interval between St. John's day and this feast a desultory warfare is carried on between the young people of the opposite sexes in the towns. They all sally out in the evenings, the girls armed with gourds containing a filthy solution of every sort of abomination they can pick up,

which they carry concealed under their clothes; while the lads are provided with nettles or thistles as weapons of offence. When any of the hostile parties meet, the contest commences by the members of each sex insulting those of the other with the most obscene and offensive language. In this warfare the female tongue, as in all countries, has, of course, the advantage. Then the boys attack the girls, nettling them about their naked breasts and shoulders, while the fair ones retaliate by discharging portions of their odoriferous compound in the faces of their assailants.

The evening before Mascal the ceremonies commence by a discharge of fire-arms, at sunset, from all the principal houses. Then every one provides himself with a torch, and during the early part of the night bonfires are kindled, and the people parade the town, carrying their lighted torches in their hands. They go through their houses, too, poking a light into every dark corner in the hall, under the couches, in the stables, kitchen, &c., as if looking for something lost, and calling out, "Akho, akhoky! turn out the spinach, and bring in the porridge: Mascal is come!" The meaning of the first two words is not very intelligible, and consequently does not admit of a literal explanation; but I should liberally translate it, "Awake from idleness! (or darkness)." After this they play, and poke fun and torches at each other.

At Adoua the different parishes have a regular fight, which put me strongly in mind of a Cambridge "town and gown" row. On the Mascal eve that I passed

there, the united parishes of St. Michael and St. Gabriel, after a long contest, beat and put to flight the men of St. Saviour's, or Medhainy Allem. I was of the retreating party; for though I belonged to the Mussulman quarter, the losing parish was nearest to me. The row usually begins among the boys, and continues till some man, seeing his sons hurt or in danger, goes to their rescue, when others of the opposite party join in against him, and so the fight becomes general. Beyond a few roughish club knocks, it is rarely that any serious consequences occur.

Early in the morning, while it is yet dark, great men have piles of wood erected on the high places near the towns, and set on fire. Then one or two oxen or sheep, according to the wealth of the offerer, are taken, and after having been led three times round the bonfire are slaughtered, and their flesh is left on the spot till it is devoured by birds of prey, hyænas, and jackals. In this, and many other of the Abyssinian customs, may be seen traces of the ancient heathen sacrifices, altars on high places, &c.

The people all rise early to see the fires; and the Mascal rising sun finds the whole Abyssinian population wide awake. In the houses of chieftains the soldiers and followers present themselves before their master, and go through the "dumfater," or war-boast, narrating how they have served him, and how they will do so again when opportunity offers, and receiving from him either gifts, promises, or bare acknowledgments, according to his generosity, or the reality of their merits in his

estimation. A similar scene takes place on a grander scale at the Royal camp, whither the chiefs of provinces and districts repair on this day, to pay their respects to the prince, and to present to him their annual gifts. On this day every house that can possibly afford it slaughters a cow; or, if it cannot compass such a luxury, a sheep: but even the former is by no means so great a thing as it would sound to English ears; for in Abyssinia a fat cow is worth at most only from 8*s.* to 12*s.* 6*d.*

I always made a point of entering into the spirit of the people on these occasions, and I believe gained many friends by so doing. When at Adoua, I gave a small entertainment to the soldiers and others of my acquaintance. It might have been called a breakfast, for, at the suggestion of some of my "intimes," I issued my cards for an early hour, in order that my guests might be able to arrange their time, as they would all probably wish to go to three or four other parties before the evening. Accordingly, I expected that they would come, and merely go through a form of feeding, as a compliment, reserving their appetites for later onslaughts; and I must own that my rather savage feelings of hospitality were piqued at the idea of their leaving me without being well filled. But truly I was agreeably disappointed; for a fine fat cow, two large sheep, and many gallons of mead, with a proportionate quantity of bread, disappeared like smoke before the twelve or fourteen guests, leaving only a few pickings for the servants.

After breaking up at my house, the party proceeded

to different feasting places, in peace, though not all so sober as might have been wished: and as, during that day, I also was a guest as well as a host, I had an opportunity of remarking, to my astonishment, that there were but very few of them who did not seem to recover entirely, for each new attack, any loss of appetite they might have sustained in the former onsets. I have said that they retired from my house in peace, and have made this observation because it is not always the case. The parties almost invariably getting more or less elevated on such occasions, drunken quarrels, sometimes leading to serious consequences, and even fatal ones, are unfortunately but too frequent, especially among soldiers at the tables of great chiefs. On the very day I am speaking of, Oubi had to order the death of two men who had killed two of their companions in a quarrel at table. Vanity is one of the principal besetting sins of the Abyssinians; and it is to this weakness, when brought out by liquor, that the origin of most of these quarrels may be traced.

I remember more than once to have heard a remark something like the following made by one of two men who, from being very dear friends, had chosen to sit next to each other at table: "You're a very good fellow, and my very dear friend; but (hiccup) you are n't half so brave or handsome as I am!" The "very dear friend" denies the fact, in a tone of voice denoting anything but amity, and states that his opinion is exactly the reverse. The parties warm in the argument; words, as is usual when men are in such a state, are bandied about without

any measure, and often without much meaning: insults follow; then blows; and if the parties round them be in a similar condition to themselves, and do not immediately separate them, it frequently happens that swords are drawn. Dangerous wounds or death are the consequence; or, as is not uncommon, others of the party, siding with the quarrellers, probably with the idea of settling the affair, are induced to join in the row, which in the end becomes a general engagement. I have noticed this trait of vanity, as exhibiting itself in various ways in a drunken Abyssinian. I always found that the best plan for keeping a man quiet, when in this state, was to remark to him that it was unbecoming in a great man to behave in such a way—that people of rank were dignified and reserved in their manners and conversation. And thus I have argued very successfully with my own servants, on more than one occasion, flattering them while they were tipsy, and then paying them off with a five-foot male bamboo when they got sober again.

I recollect one fellow who was privileged, for he had asked my leave to go to a party and get drunk. On returning home in the evening, he staggered into my room in as dignified a manner as he could, and, seating himself beside me on my couch, embraced me, and with tears in his eyes made me a thousand protestations of attachment and affection, offering to serve me in any way he could, but never by a single expression evincing that he considered me as other than a dear friend, and that indeed in a rather patronizing fashion, although the

same fellow was in the habit of washing my feet, and kissing them afterwards,* every evening, and would, if sober, have no more thought of seating himself, even on the ground, in my presence, than of jumping over the moon. With his fellow-servants too he acted similarly; for though he knew them all, and their characters and positions, he addressed them as his servants, ordering them about, and upbraiding them for sundry peccadilloes, which they had doubtless committed, and which thus came to my knowledge. In fact, in every point he acted to perfection the manners and language of a great man; and so often have I seen the same mimickry, that it has led me to believe that the chief mental employment of the lowest fellow in the country is building castles in the air, and practising to himself how he would act, and what he would say, if he were a great man.

There is a feast called "Kadam Souaur," or "left Saturday," as that day was formerly the Jewish Sabbath, but given up by the Christians for the Sunday at the time of the resurrection of our Saviour. The priests collect a quantity of rushes, and bless them in the church; and then a priest and a deacon take them out into the parish, the deacon carrying the bundle, and the priest distributing the rushes to all passers-by, binding them on the head of the receiver. They also visit all the houses with them, and generally receive a handsome present.

* An Abyssinian servant, after washing his master's feet, dries them on his own garment, and then, still kneeling before him, raises one foot in both hands and kisses it.

Father De Jacobis, the Roman Catholic missionary, was usually visited by the priests on this occasion. They came with the drums and crosses belonging to their Church, in order to present themselves before him as they would before a man whom they held in the highest esteem and respect. They did this merely for the sake of the two dollars he was in the habit of giving them; for it was well known that the esteem and influence which his truly Christian conduct and well-regulated charity had earned for him among the people were sore subjects of jealousy and causes of dislike in the hearts of the priests. Still they never failed to pay him this mark of respect, till the cruel interdict of the Coptish bishop forbade any one from holding communication with the Lazarists, on pain of excommunication.

Thus much for the fasts and feasts observed in the Christian Church of Æthiopia. As for their religion, they are, as I have before hinted, Christian rather in profession than in practice, many of their observances being quite as near to Judaism as to Christianity. Their very churches, which are in many parts extremely numerous, remind one of the altars and temples spoken of in the Old Testament, not only from their being mostly built on high places, and surrounded by groves, but also from their internal construction. In general —that is, with the exception of a few square ones, chiefly built by strangers—as, for example, that of Axum—the churches of Abyssinia are circular, and in their external appearance differ only from the better class of country huts from their being rather more

regularly fashioned, somewhat ornamented, and further distinguished by a rude cross of iron, and occasionally even of silver gilt, on the apex of their thatched conical roofs. A bell is generally placed in a neighbouring hut, or rather the substitute for a bell, real ones being seldom met with in the country. This makeshift is a peculiar kind of stone, which, when struck, produces a sound nearly resembling that of the bell of a small village church in Rutland, of which I remember having heard it said, that, when ringing for church, it had sometimes occurred to strangers visiting the place on a Sunday that the people were a very Sabbath-breaking set, as the blacksmith was working away as usual.

The interior of an Abyssinian church is divided into three compartments—a circular wall, concentric with the outer one, dividing the first passage for the laity from the place of the priests; while in the centre of all is a small square, or I believe sometimes circular place, called "Kadasta Kadastan," or Holy of Holies. Thus you have the court of the Levites, that of the priests, and the Holy of Holies, exactly after the manner of a Jewish temple. Under the exterior circle are vaults, wherein mostly great men are buried, while the exterior face of the wall which separates the place from that of the priests is adorned with the rudest possible attempts at painting. Figures of the saints, their faces always in full, whatever position their bodies may be in, are daubed in ochre, raddle, and whiting. St. George, mounted on a very chalky-looking steed, is killing something called a dragon; while at the same time his face is turned

exactly in an opposite direction to that in which he is pointing his weapon.

The Sanctum Sanctorum is the receptacle of the ark, an object of the profoundest veneration, and again of evident Jewish origin. Over this hangs its canopy of silk or chintz, and a vast number of trumpery pieces of similar material hang about in different directions among crosses, books, &c. By right, I believe, no one but priests can enter this holy place; but I have been admitted to it on more than one occasion,—partly from being esteemed a man of letters; partly because, as a countryman of the Patriarch's (all whites are considered Copts), I must be, if possible, better than a priest; partly because the reputation I enjoyed for morality put the chance of my being unclean out of the question; and doubtless still more than all, because the good monk who may have been thus unscrupulous in admitting me had the hopes of filthy lucre as an ease to his conscience.

This very cleanness or uncleanness is again purely Mosaic. A man who is, for certain reasons, unclean cannot enter the church till he is purified. Among other causes of uncleanness, to have entered a room where a child has been recently born is, as I have already stated, sufficient to render one unclean; to have touched polluted garments is another cause; and many more might be named, but that they are mostly to be found in the book of Jewish law. Circumcision is practised amongst them; and in their matters of eating they follow most strictly the dictates of Moses.

Most Abyssinians refuse to eat the flesh of the wild

boar, though some partake of it; but the camel is to all an object of horror. Following to the letter the commands of Moses, they refuse to eat animals which do not chew the cud, and those which have not cloven hoofs. Thus the hare is considered as disgusting. The generality of the people, however, do not know whence these rules are derived, but merely believe that such food is not proper, or even wholesome. I remember one man whom I brought with me into the Mussulman country made objections on being offered camel's meat. "Am I a Mussulman?" said he. "No," I replied, "nor am I either;" at the same time putting into my mouth a huge piece of fat and an onion. The poor fellow, though hungry, resisted. After fasting, however, two or three times, or rather eating "maigre" when we could get no other meat, and influenced by my very good example, he gave up his prejudices, and was soon as fond of the camel-meat as I was. I then had a good laugh at him, telling him that at least a dozen times before he had eaten the same kind of meat, mistaking it for goat's flesh, and had also twice as often drunk of the milk of the unclean beast. He at last got very philosophical, like most of his countrymen, who, after a few days' residence in a strange land, often drop altogether, not only their prejudices, but even their Christianity. I have met men in Abyssinia who would, according to their own account, rather die than swerve from their principles; and yet I have afterwards seen the same men eating Mussulman meat, and enjoying themselves on the forbidden, just as if they had been born and brought up to it. Nay more; I have

known instances of their turning Turk for the time of their sojourn in the land of Islam, and returning to their Christianity and bigotry as soon as they set foot in their own country. I remember one man especially who turned Mussulman for the sake of 150 piastres (1*l.* 10*s.*) and a new garment; and I have heard of others who, on their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, became Mussulmans for the road thither and back again; while at the Holy City and on their return to Abyssinia they put on their Christianity. These latter cases are, however, I should hope, rare; but still the truth must be told; and it is a fact that the Abyssinian is not usually difficult in matters of religion except at home. And as for the converts that missionaries may boast of having made, they are, in nine cases out of ten, only converts to calico and Maria Theresa dollars. One or two, of whom that very worthy man, Samuel Gobat, now Bishop of Jerusalem, seemed to hope good things, were the very men on whom the Lazarists founded their highest expectations, and on whose sincerity they placed the greatest confidence, only a very short time after.

But to return to what we were talking about. My Abyssinian, after a short residence, lost all his prejudices, and soon learnt my favourite Arabic proverb, "Eh! we have eaten of the clean and of the unclean, like the Barâbra." Now, the origin of this saying is as follows:—A Berberi* had tied a sheep in his hut, and

* Natives of the provinces about Dongola, Berber, &c., are so called. They are often very erroneously supposed to be stupid, and many sayings and *bulls* are fathered on them by the Sennaris and Arabs.

had gone out, closing the doôr after him. By some accident the hut took fire, and the poor sheep was roasted alive. The Berberi was puzzled as to whether he might eat of the sheep or no. His conscience told him that all meat not properly slaughtered was forbidden; but the smell of the roast was very tempting: "so," said he, "I am not certain whether this meat be clean or unclean, that's a fact. If I sin, it is therefore from ignorance; and hence no sin." So he ate of the meat, and then walked off to the fakki. "Master," said he, "if a sheep be burnt alive, is it clean or unclean?" "Decidedly unclean," replied the fakki. "Eh!" said the Berberi, as he went away in a state of the most philosophical tranquillity, "then I have eaten of the clean and of the unclean."

But after writing this story I find that its merit depended chiefly on the dialect used in the original, and that it is almost spoiled by the translation. Nevertheless I cannot bring myself to omit it.

Some of the Abyssinians hold family prejudices against certain clean animals, for which they can assign no reason whatever, except that, like the children of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, their forefathers had forbidden their use as food. Others again, for the same reason, will on no account partake of certain parts of any animal. Thus, I have known several persons who would never taste either tongue or heart, purely because some ancestor of theirs had made a vow on the subject. One of the antelope tribe, called Medauqua, is by some considered unclean, for it is said to feed upon dead

men; and I was told that, on one occasion, parts of a human finger and a ring were found in the stomach of one of these animals. I have heard the same nonsensical story told of the hare.

As for the animals which they *will* eat, these too must be killed after a rule; the animal being thrown down, his head turned towards Jerusalem, and the words "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" pronounced while the throat is being cut.

I have stated how, on St. John's day, a sheep is led round those who are afflicted with the devil, &c. Similarly on other occasions the friends of a sick man will hope that, by carrying an animal round the patient's bed three times, and then killing it, or even dashing an egg on the ground after having passed it round his head, they may benefit the sufferer; the animal thus offered being made to take the man's punishment, and make atonement for him. This, again, is quite similar to a Jewish sacrifice, although the Abyssinians would be very loth to admit that it was so.

So much for the resemblance which many of their customs bear to those of the Jews; though there are many more, which at this moment I have forgotten.

Under the head of "Ceremonies" I have already mentioned what takes place at births, baptisms, marriages, &c. The ordination of priests and deacons is, I believe, tolerably simple; for instance, I have been told that, on the arrival of the present Aboun from Egypt, the candidates, who are only required to be able to read

a little, were collected in a mass near the place where he was. The bishop then went through some ceremony, and ended by pronouncing a blessing, and blowing in the direction of the assembled crowd, who were thus all ordained. Among these was a woman with her child in arms, who had come thither from motives of curiosity. She, too, was of course ordained; but I don't remember hearing that she ever officiated. If a priest be married previously to his ordination, he is allowed to remain so; but no one can marry after having entered the priesthood.

Some, but not all, of the Abyssinians believe in the transubstantiation of the sacramental bread and wine, and assert that the actual body and blood of our Saviour are partaken of by the faithful, but that an angel takes them away from an unbeliever, and restores the bread and wine, in his hands, to their natural state, such as they were previously to the benediction. The wine is merely an infusion of dried raisins.

Simony is but too common in this country; and although fasting is mostly the penance inflicted by the Church, some more *profitable* punishment is usually added to it.

Theological disputes, especially on the natures and unction of Christ, have split Christianity into violent schisms; but as Bishop Gobat probably investigated these matters far more carefully than I did, and doubtless became thoroughly acquainted with them, I cannot do better than quote what he says on the subject:—

"The Christians of Abyssinia are at present divided into three parties, so inimical to each other, that they curse one another, and will no longer partake of the sacrament together. It is one single point of theology that disunites them; but I have so much enlarged upon it in my Journal, that I need only mention it here: it is the unceasing dispute concerning the unction of Jesus Christ. One party is of opinion, that, when it is said that Jesus Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit, it is meant that the Godhead was united with the human nature of Jesus Christ; and that, in all the passages of the Bible where the Holy Spirit is represented as having been given to Jesus Christ, the name Holy Spirit only signifies the divinity of Christ, who had no need of the assistance of the Holy Spirit, whom He could not receive, having always possessed Him. Their manner of expressing themselves is, that Jesus Christ *has* anointed; that He *has been* anointed; and that he himself *is* the unction. This party is chiefly in Tigré—the most exasperated one. Their doctrine was that of the last Coptic Abuna. The second opinion is, that, when it is said that Jesus Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit, it is signified merely that the Holy Spirit accomplished the union of the Godhead with the human nature in the person of Christ. This party is principally to be found in the provinces of Godjam and Lasta. The third opinion, predominating in all the other provinces of Abyssinia, even in Shoa, is, that Jesus Christ, as man, although united to the Godhead from the moment of His conception, received the Holy Ghost in

the human part of His nature, in the same manner as we receive Him—viz. as a gift of the Father—in order that He might be enabled to accomplish, as man, the work of our redemption: whence they conclude, that, because Jesus Christ received the Holy Spirit as we receive Him, His unction is to be called a third birth. These are the most tolerant. I have understood that, after my departure from Gondar, some of the most learned men left off calling the unction of Jesus Christ a birth. It appears that these differences of opinion are founded upon the different views they have adopted of the two natures of Jesus Christ; although, according to the letter, they are all Monosophytes. They hold, as all the other sects of the East do, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only. If we except the differences of opinion concerning the unction of Jesus Christ, they all have nearly the same superstition."

The reverence in which the saints are held by the Abyssinians is of a piece with the rest of their religion, as it denotes extreme bigotry, combined with lamentable ignorance. In many cases the patron saint is preferred to the Almighty; and a man who would not hesitate to invoke the name of his Maker in witness to a falsehood would have difficulty in disguising his perjury if he were appealed to in the name of St. Michael or St. George. It is also a well-known fact, and most common of occurrence, that a favour besought in the name of God would often be refused, while, if the request were immediately after repeated in the name of the Virgin, or of some favourite saint, it would pro-

bably be granted. This may be observed in the appeal of the common street beggar in Tigré, whose ordinary cry is, "Silla Izgyheyr! Silla Medhainy Allam!" (For the sake of God! For the sake of the Saviour!)—while, if he be very importunate, he will change his usual whining tone, and add with persuasive emphasis, "Silla Mariam! Silla Abouna Tekla Haimanout!" (For the sake of Mary! For the sake of Saint Tekla Haimanout!)

There are numberless saints; and their lives, no doubt written originally by some clever romancers, are copied by the scribes, and sold to the devout. Most of them are rather long stories, and all very ridiculous ones. I will, however, abridge one or two of the most wonderful, and relate them for the amusement of the marvel-loving part of my readers:—

Gabro Menfus Kouddos (Slave of the Holy Ghost) was a great saint from his birth; nay, more—he was born a saint. No sooner did he enter the world than he stood up, and three days after his birth he bowed his head thrice, saying, in a distinct voice, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." He never tasted of his mother's milk, nor during the whole period of his life partook of food or drink of any sort. Once, when praying on a mountain, he fell over a precipice, two hundred cubits deep. Two angels immediately joined their spread wings under him to support him; but he refused their assistance, saying that he trusted to God alone for help. Another time he was ascending a very high mountain, and, being fatigued,

the Holy Trinity came and assisted him. Many other equally absurd and almost blasphemous stories are related of him; at last, after a very long life, I forget of how many years, the Almighty sent Azrael, the angel of death, to take him. But the saint refused to die, saying, that, as he had neither eaten nor drunk, he could not die. So all the saints came to him in turn for the purpose of persuading him to leave earth for Paradise. St. John the Baptist first addressed him, saying that he had gone the way of all flesh, notwithstanding his many privations and sufferings. Gabro Menfus Kouddos, however, at once met him with the answer—"Yes; but *you* could not fast even for forty days, but fed on locusts and wild honey." Thus he replied to all the saints, and at last even to the Virgin and our Saviour. Still, however, the decrees of the Omnipotent must be obeyed, and his life was taken from him; but then there was a dispute among the elements as to what was to become of his body. The earth refused to receive it, as he had never partaken of her produce. A similar refusal was made by the water, for he had never taken a drop within his lips. The fire had also equally strong objections. So the saint was restored to life, and taken up alive into heaven. His tomb is, however, shown at Zoukwahla in Shoa; but it is said to contain only one of his ribs, which, at the time of his ascent to heaven, he took out and left on earth as a memento for his followers.

There is another saint,—I think Tekla Haimanout,—whose whole life and actions are an exact copy of those

of our Saviour, even to the fact of his father being a carpenter, named Joseph, and his mother bearing the name of Mary.

Abouna Aragawy was one of the nine missionaries sent to Abyssinia by St. Athanasius. His doctrine and the miracles which he wrought gained for him many followers; but from some of the unbelieving he suffered persecution. This is the account given by some historians; while others assert that, overcome by his popularity, he sought retirement from this world, in order to devote the remainder of his days to religious duty. Be it as it may, he came to the rock on which is now the celebrated monastery of Devra Dàmo. After walking several times round it, without finding any means of access to its summit, he prayed to the Almighty, who sent him an enormous boa-constrictor, which offered to carry him up in its mouth; but he said, "I fear your mouth: turn round, and let me take your tail." So the snake did as he was desired; and the saint, holding fast by its tail, was drawn up to the summit of the rock in perfect safety. The snake, having performed its duty, offered to leave the saint if he wished it; but Aragawy begged that it would remain, making, however, the condition of its not alarming or destroying any of his disciples who might come to visit him. They then took possession of the caves and holes which are in the mountain, where they are by many supposed to be still living. Some, however, pretend that the snake is dead; but no one is so wanting in faith as for a moment to deny that the saint yet lives there, and will continue to

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live till the day of judgment. No curious person, however, dares to venture into the cave. The monks will not allow lights to be taken in; and the people assert that a spirit which protects the place will not permit any one who enters to come out alive. Probably there is a pit or chasm into which some one may have fallen in former times, and which has given rise to this superstition.

When I first went to Rohabaita it was reported that an immense snake had some years before been killed there by a hunter. The man was severely reproached by the priests, who said that the snake was the guardian angel of the place. It was reported to have been 27 cubits, or 40 feet, in length, and was probably of the boa tribe.

CHAPTER XXXII.

OUTLINE OF THE MODERN HISTORY OF TIGRÉ.

THE following sketch of the recent history of Abyssinia I have compiled from the accounts given me by native Abyssinians—men of learning, and who were supposed to be good at relating stories of the last reign or two. Of the earlier history of the country, as recorded in the ancient native chronicles, I do not attempt to give any account, for two reasons: in the first place, it has been fully given by Bruce and other late writers; and, in the second place, I never so much as saw the outside of the Kibir Za Negust (or Gavra Negust, whichever it be called), unless it were one of a pile of MSS. which my friend Mr. A. D'Abbadie showed me. As for its name, which all authors translate "Glory of the Kings," I should be led to suspect that it simply means "the deeds of the Kings;" but, as I never passed for a literary character, I do not wish my hint to become a train, leading to one of those controversial *blow-ups* which of late have unfortunately been too common among travellers of greater learning, and I should have guessed greater sense, than myself. I never studied the Giz language, nor could I even

write my name in the Tigré; though, from being possessed of a tolerably good ear, and from having for a long time been forced to speak that language or hold my tongue (an alternative to which I have always had the greatest objection), I picked up I believe more of the Tigré than any European had hitherto done; most having preferred the Amhàra language as easier to learn, and more fashionable among great men.

The reign of Yasous, son of Yohannes the First, commenced in 1829, and was marked with events which were sufficient to render it an important epoch in the annals of Æthiopian history. An inroad on the province of Amhàra, made by the Wollo Gallas, was repulsed by him with great slaughter of the aggressors. This defeat, however signal, was yet insufficient to restrain the cupidity of the tribes, who soon reappeared in greater force than before. Unable to keep them in order by compulsory means, Yasous entered into an alliance with them by marrying one of their princesses, of the name of Wovit. The displeasure of the Abyssinian people at this match had prevented Wovit from assuming her dignity, or appearing as empress; but at the death of the king, when her son Joas succeeded his father, she at once undertook the management of the empire. At first a sort of guard of honour, consisting of about 1800 men, was despatched to the empress from her native country, but Joas afterwards sent for his two uncles, who arrived, bringing with them about a thousand men more. At last the Galla influence became so great that their language was adopted as the language

of the court; and Joas himself was in the habit of stating openly his preference of the Galla language to that of Abyssinia. The disgust which the Abyssinian people felt at this conduct increased, till at length, after many futile endeavours to diminish the Galla influence, the people rose against the Emperor. It was on this occasion that Michaël Suhul, Governor of Tigré, so well known in that country as Ras Michaël, was sent for by Joas to assist in putting down the rebels. Although in heart he approved the just indignation of the insurgents, yet, partly perhaps for ambition's sake, partly flattered by the title of Ras lately conferred upon him, he attacked and defeated them in Beghemder.

It was about this period that Bruce arrived in Abyssinia, and a detailed account of all that passed may be found in his book. For us, suffice it to say that Ras Michaël, after this victory, determined to undermine the power of the Gallas, whom he hated every whit as cordially as did the rest of the Abyssinians. The best means to achieve this design appeared to him to be that of rendering the power of the Emperor only a tool by which he himself might govern the empire. Accordingly, when too late, the weak Joas found out that, while seeking to get the mastery of his enemies, he had brought a man to rule over himself. At his instigation the Galla tribes revolted under the command of one Warraynia Fasil. The revolt was apparently against the empire, but in reality only against the Ras, who, of course, set about quelling it, and succeeded, totally

defeating Fasil. Among the prisoners captured were found some of the personal attendants of the Emperor, who, on being questioned, admitted that they had joined the rebel army at the expressed wish of their master. Michaël, enraged at this piece of royal treachery, at once decided on having Joas put to death. Thus he was himself in possession of absolute authority, and might doubtless have assumed the title of Emperor had he chosen to do so. From that day to the present the appellation of Ras is in reality the title of power, though, following the example of Ras Michaël, his successors have always chosen to have a puppet Emperor of the line of Solomon.*

At the present time, as will be gathered throughout this work, the empire of Æthiopia is divided into three main parts, besides various tribes of Gallas, all of whom are more or less independent of each other. The most powerful perhaps of these divisions is what is now called the Amhàra country, though formerly Amhàra was but a small province. It now extends from the river Taccazy to the frontiers of the Sennar country, and the Abai or Nile. This is the country governed by the Ras. The Ras of the present day is youngest son of Gouxa, a chief of the Yedjo Galla, who, about fifty years ago, dethroned the then nominal Emperor, and named another instead of him, who of course created

* No man can take the title of Hatzé, or Negous (Emperor), unless he be of the Imperial family of Æthiopia, which traces its origin, some travellers think justly, to the son of King Solomon the Great and the Queen of Sheba.

him Ras. The present Emperor is wretchedly poor. I have heard it said that he makes parasols for sale. Whether this be so or not, it is certain that he has no power or authority whatever, although the Ras will, in his presence, stand or sit on the ground, and show him every outward demonstration of respect.

Ras Michaël, having been defeated and taken prisoner when on one of his expeditions against the Amhàra, was confined at Gondar. The Ras had left one Dejatch Kefla Yessous as his deputy in the government of Tigré, who, on hearing of his master's misfortune, forsook his allegiance to him, and determined to make himself independent governor of the province. To effect his purpose more certainly, he sent a letter, accompanied by a packet of deadly poison, to a friend of his who was with the Ras, requiring of him to administer the poison to his master when he might have an opportunity of doing so undiscovered. The person intrusted with the commission was however a man of more conscience than his instigator, and gave both the letter and packet to the Ras. Michaël either pretended to take the poison, or, confident in the efficacy of some antidote he possessed, really took it, in order, as he said, to show the people that he had no fear of assassination. The following night his attendants and guards came to his chamber, expecting to find him a corpse; but he was well, and his apartment appeared to be illumined by a sort of supernatural halo which surrounded him. The report was immediately circulated that he had been miraculously protected by his patron St. Michaël. To have detained

a man so evidently favoured by the saints would have been in the highest degree criminal; so his liberty was offered him; but at the same time he was asked how he could return to his country, where Kefla Yessous had excited a rebellion against him. Michaël replied that he only required his mule and one favourite servant, whom he named, to accompany him thither. These being granted him, he set out for Tigré. On his arrival (as he had doubtless foreseen) the principal families of the country and his former soldiers collected at once around him. He engaged the rebel chief, beat his troops, and, having taken him prisoner, put him to death with the most cruel tortures. Yessous was exposed to the cold at night, and to the heat of the sun during the day, his only clothing being a kind of shirt of waxed cloth stuck on to his body. He was then cut up joint by joint. The first day his tormentors amputated one joint of his right-hand little finger, the next day the second, and so on; daily cutting off a joint till he died. Care was however taken that he should not die too quickly from loss of blood, for after each amputation the bleeding was stopped by the usual means of searing, or putting the wounded part into boiling butter. His son, Welda Selassy, fearing lest he too might fall under the Ras's displeasure, and come in for similar treatment to his father's, fled the country, and, after passing Gondar, took refuge in Gojam, where Ras Hailo (father of Wozro Dinkitou, the present Dejatch Gosho's mother) received him hospitably, and promised him his protection until the death of Michaël. This event, however, did not

take place till after Welda Selassy had passed several years in Gojam.

Ras Michaël was succeeded by his son, Dejatch Weldo Gabriel: he however reigned only for a short time; and at his death, which was occasioned by a musket-ball in a battle which he fought at Meddeb, near Devra Tabor, against Tallak Ali (Big Ali), father of Aligaz Faris, Welda Selassy appeared as pretender to the throne. He met with considerable opposition from the partisans of the former family; but, overcoming these by dint of perseverance, he was allowed to take the title of Ras with the utmost tranquillity. The family of Kefla Yessous and Welda Selassy were of distinguished origin, and came from Antalo, in Enderta, of which place they were chiefs.

Welda Selassy reigned for twenty-five years, and during this long period obtained and maintained for himself the character of a good and wise prince, which has survived him to this day. His reign was not the most tranquil, for he was many times obliged to put down rebellions in his own country, besides engaging in numerous wars with the neighbouring chiefs. Among the latter was Ras Gavry, of Simyen, of whom we have before spoken as the grandfather of Oubi. Gavry had at no time forces sufficient to resist Welda Selassy, and on his approach fled before him; so that the latter had only to pillage the enemy's country and retire quietly. After playing at this losing game on three different occasions, Gavry came to the conclusion that an alliance with so powerful a chief would answer his purpose better than

incurring his enmity. Accordingly he entered into a treaty with the Ras, engaging to assist him with his troops when he might require his aid. Welda Selassy died a natural death at Cheliquot, universally regretted by his subjects.

Dejatch Welda Raphaël succeeded his father; but being a minor, the chief of Temben, named Dejatch Gabro Michaël, was appointed regent. Sabagardis, son of Ito Weldo, hereditary chief of the province of Agamy, rising with his people in rebellion, was engaged by him, defeated, and he himself taken prisoner and sent to the young prince. Welda Raphaël, either from sheer folly, or from the persuasion of some evil-disposed persons about him, liberated his dangerous prisoner, pretending afterwards that he had escaped without his cognizance. It was, however, reported, and on good authority, that, disliking the regent, and mistrusting the influence which he was acquiring over the people, he had entered into an arrangement with Sabagardis, whereby this latter was to become his fitourari, or general; and they, combined, were to overthrow Gabro Michaël. The news of this treacherous conduct on the part of his ward, reaching the ears of the regent, incensed him not a little; but for a time he thought it more prudent to conceal his anger and see what turn events might take. Meanwhile, Sabagardis, having returned to his country, was preparing for another revolt. When the intelligence of this second rising was communicated to the prince and regent at Axum, whither they had gone together, the latter upbraided his ward so

severely for his misconduct, that, invectives increasing, at last they became open enemies, and the matter ended by Gabro Michaël's informing the prince that he considered his allegiance to him as dissolved; and moreover, that, being a much fitter person to govern the kingdom than he, it was his intention to consider himself for the future as governor of Tigré instead of regent; while, from gratitude to his father, he assigned to the young prince the government of the province of Enderta, whither he requested him to retire as speedily as possible. As the party of Gabro Michaël was much stronger than his own, the prince had nothing to do but comply with the best possible grace, lest a worse fate should be in reserve for him.

Dejatch Gabro Michaël was proclaimed governor of Tigré, at Àdoua. The town of Àdoua was formerly the capital of the chiefs of Hamasayn, then the most powerful province of this part of Abyssinia. Afterwards Ras Michaël built the church and suburb called after his patron saint; and his son, following his example, built the opposite one of St. Gabriel. The palace was also of old date; but Michaël, finding it in bad repair, renewed it. It has since been allowed to fall into ruins.

Sabagardis in the mean while had been laying waste all the country adjoining his province. In Abyssinia, so long as a rebel has luck in forays, and leads his men where they may find plunder, plenty of hands will flock round him. So it happened to Sabagardis; and the numbers of his troops being greatly augmented, he

advanced farther into the enemy's country till he was met by the army of Gabro Michaël, at a place called Givin, between Temben and Enderta. The battle which ensued was contested with the greatest obstinacy on both sides for several hours, until it appeared that the fortune of the day was rather on the side of Sabagardis. At this critical moment, however, Seyfo, Gabro Michaël's brother, with a detachment, took him in the rear, and destroying his camp caused such a panic among his followers that they fled precipitately. Here fell Gabro, Sabagardis's brother (surnamed Goura, or left-handed), a man renowned for his bravery, and for being the most skilful marksman of the day. He was shot during the action.

Sabagardis fled to Agamy, pursued closely by the victors. After some time, however, he rallied his broken forces, and another battle was fought; but he was again defeated, and this time with so severe a loss that he found it necessary to take refuge in his stronghold on the mountain of Bàty Felassy.

As I before said, success collects many soldiers to a rebel, so now Sabagardis suffered from a reaction; for equally true is it that to lose the day is a terrible blow to a chief in these countries. A battle won is an augmentation of troops; a battle lost often leaves the vanquished entirely alone, or with only a few personal attendants. Dejatch Gabro Michaël shortly after withdrew to his country of Temben; on which, Sabagardis, descending, collected some few men, and, recommencing his system of plunder, these speedily increased to an army.

Gabro Michaël returning, they met at the mountain of 'Alloqua. The troops of Agamy were far inferior to his in point of numbers, but, from having the advantage of being on the mountain, and also most of them being armed with guns, they were able to pick off his soldiers without being molested themselves. Gabro Michaël accordingly retired, keeping, however, his army together, and prepared to attack his rival when he might have a convenient opportunity. This soon occurred; for Sabagardis, descending, collected a large force and marched towards Adoua: on the appearance of the enemy he retired towards Addigrat, probably anxious to gain time, that he might strengthen his forces. The enemy followed him, and a battle was fought at Bàty, in that province. But Fortune had turned her wheel, and Gabro Michaël was wounded by a musket-ball in the early part of the action, and was afterwards speared by Sabagardis's own hand. The victory being thus achieved, Sabagardis proceeded to the capital, intending on his arrival to be proclaimed governor; but there he was met by the sons of the late Fitourari Garramlac (Wassan and Desta), who, with the men of Addy Aboun, Gandafta, Shirie, and Zatta, gave him battle. He, however, overcame them, taking and killing about five hundred men. Many of the prisoners were persons of considerable importance in the country; of them, some were put to death, and others maimed, by cutting off their hands and feet, putting out their eyes, &c. Sabagardis then took possession of the dignity to which he aspired.

Oubi, natural son of Dejatch Hailo Mariam, and consequently grandson of Ras Gavry, chief of Simyen, Woggera, &c., formed an alliance with Dejatch Sabagardis by marrying his daughter. Up to this time he had been, as it were, tributary to, or rather protected by, the governors of the Amhàra country; but after his marriage, being on one occasion summoned by Ras Marié, he turned refractory, and sent back a message to say that for the future he meant to acknowledge no authority but that of his father-in-law. Marié attacked him in Simyen. Oubi sent with all haste to Sabagardis, praying him to succour him. Sabagardis complied, but apparently entered into the business with very little good will; for it was not until after the battle of Shoada had been won by Marié, and Oubi had taken refuge in his mountain, that the Tigré troops, commanded by Belladta Gabro, appeared on the scene of action.

This neglect on the part of Sabagardis so much disgusted Oubi that he determined at any cost to make up with Ras Marié and avenge himself on his father-in-law. Accordingly, descending from his mountain, he went to the Ras, wearing a halter round his neck, and carrying a stone on his head. Marié accepted his submission, thus humbly offered, and restored to him his government of Simyen, but took from him Walkait, Woggera, and Tsagaddy. Meanwhile Sabagardis had made an expedition against the Agows, tributaries of Ras Marié, and had ravaged their country, plundering their cattle and burning their villages. On his return he summoned Oubi to join him; but this prince now

answered him as he had before answered the Ras, stating that he obeyed no summons but Marié's. Sabagardis, enraged, attacked him in Simyen, defeated his troops, and made himself master of the mountains of Tazzan and Hai, heretofore considered impregnable, as no former chieftain had ever succeeded in taking them. He found them to contain much wealth, the accumulations of Oubi's ancestors, and also a great number of prisoners, some of whom were almost entirely crippled, from having been confined there, tied to a log, for thirty years.

After these victories Sabagardis withdrew his forces to the other side of the Taccazy, doubtless foreseeing that he would have to defend his country against a retaliatory attack from Oubi and Ras Marié, to whom the former had fled for assistance. Nor did he wait long in suspense, for a message from Oubi politely requested him to preserve the grass in the neighbourhood of Àdoua, as he should have need of it for his horses when he had taken the country. Sabagardis, in return for this insolent message, sent back an equally ironical invitation to the allies to come to his country, as he was expecting them, and would not fail to prepare a great feast in their honour.

Judging of the point where, from the season of the year and the reports of his spies, it appeared most probable that the Amhàra would attempt to ford the river, Sabagardis posted himself there with a large force, and strengthened his position by entrenchments, &c.; but the enemy, having news of these precautions, deceived him altogether by false movements, so as not only to

draw him from his strong position, but also to induce him to divide his army. Indeed, when he met them at Mai Islamai, near Devra Abbai, where they really crossed, they found him with only half of his army, commanded by himself and his eldest son Dejatch Hagous; while the remainder, under his sons Weld' Inchaël and Carsai, were guarding the more northern frontier towards Addy Abo.

Sabagardis, it appears, was altogether taken aback by the awkward circumstances into which he had been decoyed, and lost his presence of mind before the battle began. Some say that he drank large quantities of spirits; but whether he was sober or drunk, his actions appeared such as to warrant the supposition, held by many, that he was in the latter condition. Retaining a large part of his soldiers with him in the camp, he remained idle, while his son Hagous was with a few followers fighting desperately against overwhelming numbers. It is said that the young prince with his own hand shot nine or ten of the enemy, and twice nearly hit the Ras himslf, whom he marked from the red umbrella carried over him; one of these two shots killing the man who carried the dangerous piece of finery, and the other the animal on which the Ras rode. Sabagardis could not be roused from his lethargy till it was too late; in fact, till his brave son had lost his life, and numbers of his followers had been destroyed. When, however, this news reached him, he went into the battle just in time to be taken prisoner, and to see the remainder of his forces put to flight.

This disastrous battle was fought in the month Tirry (December), 1830. The cruel Galla horsemen, many of whom had remained idle during the fight, now came up for the pursuit; and, they and their horses being fresh, pursued the miserable fugitives for two or three days' journey, slaughtering them wherever they caught them. Their bones were visible in some places when I passed fifteen years after. Sabagardis, too, was murdered in cold blood, it is said, by Oubi's own hand. Marié died of illness, and was buried at the church of St. Samuel in Devra Abbai. The victorious army, under Dori, Marié's brother, and Oubi, proceeded towards Axum. They had, however, some difficulty about entering the place, from the superstitious reverence with which, as a sanctuary, it is regarded. Dori himself declared that when he turned his face towards the town his eyes were blinded, but that his sight was restored the moment he looked in the opposite direction. Returning homeward, Dori fell sick, and was only just able to arrive at Devra Tabor, where he died, after a reign of only three months.

Oubi remained for a time quiet in Simyen, but not very long. The provinces of Tigré were divided into two parties; one in favour of Weld' Inchaël, Sabagardis's son, the other headed by Ato Baraky. The latter sent a message to Oubi, inviting him to come and join his party. Oubi complied, and at Temben fought and beat the men of that province and those of Garra Alta; but fearing lest the powerful province of Agamy should join the defeated party before he was prepared for them,

he withdrew for a time to Simyen. Having collected forces, he returned to Tigré, and made a plundering expedition through Temben and Garra Alta, and thence proceeded to Ha Haily, where he had to fight a severe battle, which however he won. He then declared himself governor of Tigré.

After this Oubi engaged Carsai and Weld' Inchaël, in Addigrat, and defeated them. Carsai then retired to Enderta, and Weld' Inchaël to Hamasayn; but they both came soon afterwards to the victor, offering their submission, and promising fealty. Oubi received them generously, and granted to Weld' Inchaël the government of Hamasayn and the provinces properly called Tigré,* and to Carsai that of Agamy and Enderta, reserving a tribute for himself.

Weld' Inchaël's death, caused by a blow from a club thrown at him when in Hamasayn, removed a great obstacle from Oubi's path. Still his brother Carsai remained, and to all appearances was a likely man to give him much annoyance, as he remained peaceable for a very short time only; and so little secure did Oubi think himself, that he never dared to remain long in any place, constantly changing his quarters, and quelling little insurrections, &c., which might be excited against him. Carsai had for some time been in the mountain of Dembaloul (Enda Sion) in Haramat. Judg-

* The name of Tigré is now commonly applied to the whole country east of the Taccazy where the Tigré language is spoken, though formerly only a district north of Adoua was so called. In the same manner the province of Amhàra gives its name to all the country west of that river.

ing, however, that he had little at present to hope for from force, he proposed to form an alliance with Oubi by marrying his daughter, which being accepted, he retired quietly to his province of Agamy.

As will be frequently remarked in the annals of Abyssinian history, alliances of this sort were seldom of much avail in preventing parties thus connected from warring one against the other. Carsai soon got tired of his quiet life, and, remembering that he was rightful heir to the last prince of Tigré, rose in rebellion against his father-in-law,* and, sending presents to Ras Ali (who had succeeded his brother Dori), promised that, if he would assist him to recover his father's throne, and to keep Oubi from molesting him, he would pay him an annual tribute. Ali sent messengers, deciding that the brook Wurra, near Howzayn, should be the boundary line between Oubi and Carsai. Oubi took no further notice of this message than by ingratiating himself with the people and his soldiery by means of well-timed liberality, and preparing his troops for an expedition against Carsai. Passing through Àdoua the people received him with no mark of honour, judging that his enemy would prove victorious in the coming struggle. He himself, it appears, was not over-confident of the issue, for he advanced on his way quietly, taking no notice of the rather impolitic conduct of the people through whose country he passed. At Farras Mai he met Carsai, who had taken up a position on the high

* It will be observed that Oubi, by his marriage with Sabagardis's daughter, was brother-in-law as well as father-in-law to Carsai.

ground, and had with him a formidable army. Our countryman, Coffin, was among his followers, also the celebrated warrior Garra Raphaël, Baraky, Habbal Hailo, chief of Hamasayn, and most of the people of Tigré. With Oubi were, among others, his half-brethren Marso and Bitoul, of whom we have made mention in relating the history of his family.

Garra Raphaël led on the attack, and, rushing down with the greatest impetuosity, for a time drove back the forces of Oubi's fitowrari, or general of advanced guard. Marso, however, came bravely to the rescue with a body of horse. The troops of Garra Raphaël being unsupported were soon cut to pieces, and, Baraky taking to flight in a most cowardly manner, the rest, with Carsai himself, followed his example, although scarcely any but Garra Raphaël's men had at all suffered. Carsai himself, mounted on the horse which Oubi had given him on his marriage, escaped with difficulty, being recognised and closely pursued by several of the enemy. He however owed his liberty to the pistols he carried, with which he is said to have shot two or three of his pursuers. He at length arrived at the mountain of Haramat, but with such precipitation had he fled, that, like Turpin and his good mare Black Bess, no sooner had his gallant steed carried him out of danger than it fell down dead. Several prisoners were taken after the battle; and to keep them for the future more quiet, Oubi ordered the hands of forty-four chiefs of note and influence to be cut off.

Some time after he went with his army and sur-

rounded the mountain whereon Carsai had taken refuge. But Carsai was not to be easily starved out, for, although he had several persons with him, precautions had been taken to collect a sufficient supply of provisions to last out any siege of probable duration. The besieging troops were far worse off than the besieged. In a hostile country they had the greatest possible difficulty to procure food, and at length were nearly reduced to starvation. Carsai, partly from friendship, partly doubtless from a wish to display the abundance he enjoyed, sent occasional supplies to Belladta Darraso, and others of his former friends who were in the hostile camp, while the rest of the troops were obliged to be contented with the flesh of dead horses, old leather, &c. Notwithstanding all this, Oubi would on no account be prevailed on to raise the siege. Carsai, on the other hand, showed great want of perseverance, for, getting tired of confinement, he proposed to surrender conditionally. This was objected to by almost all his people, who argued that the besiegers, pinched for food as they were, could not possibly hold out much longer. Carsai called together the learned men, priests, &c., and inquired of them whether they thought he might trust to Oubi's oath, should he swear to do him no harm. This he did because his conscience, doubtless, accused him of having himself broken the oath of allegiance which he had taken at his marriage. His counsellors assured him that, should Oubi swear solemnly, no danger could be anticipated from his hands. So Carsai sent messengers to Oubi, offering to descend if he had his

sworn promise of safety to himself and followers. A man of the name of Shelika Gaddy was the bearer of this message. His name had become celebrated during the war, not so much for his daring in battle as for his cunning. He would disguise himself as a monk or beggar, and, concealing a pistol under his clothes, steal into the enemy's camp at night, murder a chief, and escape in the confusion. One evening he entered Oubi's own tent and fired at him, but missed him. Though this was in the centre of the camp, and he was known to every one, yet so cleverly was he disguised that he escaped without being recognised. He would also lie in ambush near the camp, and kill the grass-cutters as they came out for provender; and in this also he was so successful that it became dangerous for a party to leave the camp for any purpose whatever. When therefore he appeared as ambassador, the hatred borne him by the grooms was so great that they went in a body to Oubi, petitioning to be allowed to kill him with their small sickles, in return for the cruelty with which he had slaughtered their unarmed brethren on former occasions. Oubi, however, aimed at the lion, and cared not to mar his plan by the punishment of the jackal: so he treated Gaddy with distinction, and clothed him and sent him back safe to his master, with a favourable message. The oath was taken, not only by Oubi, but also by all his principal men. Carsai, satisfied with this, descended from the mountain, and presented himself before his father-in-law. Oubi received him with every appearance of friendship, ordered a tent to be

pitched for him near his own, and then, at night, surrounded him with soldiers and put him into irons. This perjury was Oubi's sin alone, for the chiefs, who had sworn, were very much disgusted at being thus forced to break their oaths. Even the common soldiers made no secret of their anger at such perfidious conduct, calling aloud in camp "Isgyoh!" (Oh God). Oubi ordered the drums to be beaten and a proclamation issued (a sort of Riot Act I should opine), but the troops for several days continued their demonstrations of horror; and during the week which followed Carsai's imprisonment no one entered into Oubi's presence. Carsai was shortly after sent to prison, but he soon managed to bribe the keeper, and he and Shelika Gaddy escaped. They reached Avergelly in their flight, but were there recognised by some shepherds, who took them and sent them back to Oubi. On their return they were more rigorously watched than before, and laden with heavy irons. Carsai remains in prison to this day. Shelika Gaddy died in a manner almost as extraordinary as he had lived. Being confined with a brother of Garra Raphaël's, and happening to have a quarrel with his fellow prisoner, the latter insulted him, by telling him that he was no soldier, but at best only able to fight with old women or unarmed grass-cutters; to which Gaddy answering angrily, his companion shot him dead with a gun, which one of their guard had carelessly left near them. His most dangerous enemy being unable longer to annoy him, Oubi for some time remained quiet.

Of the sons of Sabagardis, two only were now at liberty, Hammàm Dahar and Gwangwoul. These, with a chief of the name of Belladta Gabriel (one of Oubi's partisans), divided the government of Carsai's province of Agamy. But though for a time things appeared to have settled down tranquilly, they were not destined to remain so very long. On one occasion, when encamped at Mai Delata, near Àdoua, on his return from Simyen, Oubi ordered the chiefs of the provinces to furnish him with a large supply of provisions for his troops. All acceded with the exception of Hammàm Dahar, who rashly answered that the people of Agamy had been accustomed to furnish soldiers, but never to supply provisions for strangers. Oubi's answer to this foolish bravado was an order to take him and put him in prison on the mountain of Tazzan, in Simyen. His brother, Gwangwoul, on the other hand, pretended to be willing to obey Oubi's orders, and promised to furnish the King with the requisite supplies, if only he would lend him soldiers to enforce it. The troops were accordingly sent, and Gabriel was named to receive the contributions collected. Gwangwoul scattered the Amhàra soldiers about the country on pretext of their collecting the tribute, but in reality that they might the more easily be killed by his people. Then, aided by Garra Raphaël, he seized Àto Gabriel, and, taking him prisoner, retired into the mountain country, and declared himself in open rebellion. Oubi, fearing lest the whole country should rise against him if he delayed, marched at once on Agamy, and by his presence kept in check

those people who were secretly partisans of the rebel prince. Garra Raphaël's troops from the province of Temben, of which he was governor, had however joined them, and a few chiefs of smaller note; plenty of whom are always ready to come forward in any enterprise of the kind, from the hope of gaining something by plunder.

Although in considerable numbers, these troops formed by no means a formidable army—in fact, they dispersed almost without striking a blow; Gwangwoul flying into the country of the Taltals, and Garra Raphaël seeking refuge in the mountain of Dabba Salama. Oubi for some time afterwards amused himself by blazing away at this rock with an old three-pounder brass gun (which our countryman Salt had taken into Abyssinia some years back), persuading himself and his people that by means of this formidable but very ill-served piece of ordnance he could destroy any mountain that he pleased.

After this had gone on for some time, the patriarch arrived in the neighbourhood, and a priest was sent, bearing a cross, to plead for a reconciliation between Oubi and Gwangwoul. He succeeded, Gwangwoul promising never again to revolt during the lifetime of Oubi.

Gwangwoul was Sabagardis's favourite son, although the youngest. It is said that his father foresaw the fate of his brethren, and always expressed a wish that he should succeed him, begging all his adherents to elect him after his death. Hence arose a certain degree of

jealousy between him and his brethren; and hence possibly is it that he lives quietly under Oubi, while two of his brothers are pining away their lives in a prison.

Balgadda Araia, chief of the province of Arho, and connected with the family of the former Ras Welda Selassy, was and still is one of the most formidable obstacles to Oubi's governing the country of Tigré in peace. By descent he has claims on the good will of the people; still more so from his character and disposition. Like Robin Hood, or any other such hero of story, the Balgadda's life and actions form the subject of numerous legends and tales. In person handsome, in disposition generous and affable, and brave almost to rashness, he has known, although not rich, how to win the hearts of many; and this is saying a great deal for a man in Abyssinia. Immediately after the death of Sabagardis he declared himself an adherent of Carsai's; and though, in point of years, scarcely arrived at manhood, he showed, by many deeds, that he had an old head on young shoulders, and became so highly considered, that at an early age he was intrusted with the government of the important province of Enderta. From that time to the present (excepting for a short period previous to the battle of Devra Tabor, when Oubi left him in charge of part of Tigré) he has kept up a sort of guerilla warfare with the Amhàra, annoying them in every possible manner, often fighting them, and frequently beating them with very inferior forces; and when himself beaten, escaping with a dexterity which at times would savour almost of the miraculous. He lives

entirely with his soldiers, making no display of himself, as is common with Abyssinian chiefs even of the lowest degree. On a march he will go on foot, carrying his own gun, and amusing himself with shooting grouse or gazelle, and when tired will jump up behind one of his mounted servants. To his enemies he is a sort of Jack-o'-lantern—here, there, and everywhere. He may be seen at a place, and an expedition will be sent against him; but scarcely have they started with the utmost secrecy, hoping to take him unawares, when to their dismay and astonishment their rear-guard is attacked and routed by him, and yet he is nowhere to be seen when succour arrives.

On several occasions he has had Oubi's life at his mercy, but has always refrained from doing him injury. Oubi, on one occasion when pursuing him, passed under a rock where he was concealed, and within twenty yards of him. The Balgadda covered him with his gun, but refused to draw the trigger on him. Some say that he has a superstitious notion with regard to Oubi, and that he has been heard to declare that he would fight all Oubi's army if he was not with them, but would run away with all his troops if Oubi himself came, attended only by his stable-boys. It appears that he must have very active and trustworthy spies in the hostile camp. Once a general of Oubi's had ridiculed the Balgadda in a conversation over some mead, saying that he was not to be called a good general, as no one could tell how he could command an army, and sneering at the feats for which he was so much celebrated; comparing them to

the actions of a kite, which dashes on its prey, seizes it, and is off again. He likewise (being probably in his cups) boasted of what he would do if he were set to catch him. All this passed in the Amhàra camp, and doubtless the speaker never dreamed for a moment that his opinions would be retailed to the Balgadda himself: but it appears that, somehow or other, they came to his knowledge, and he determined to give the Amhàra chief a proof of his dexterity. One morning, on awaking, the general (Obsàbius) found to his astonishment that some one had been in his tent during the night, robbed him of his two favourite guns, drunk up the mead which he had beside him, and left a drawn sword across his bed-head. Strict inquiries were made among the soldiers, though no one could imagine whom they ought to suspect of so daring an act. The missing articles were nowhere to be found, and the theft became a matter of wonder and astonishment to all in the camp. At last, however, a countryman came, and asked to see the general. On being admitted, he drew from a package of cotton cloth the missing guns, and presented them to their owner with a note from Araia, stating that it was he who had paid the nocturnal visit; that he complimented him on the excellence of his mead, though little on his watchfulness; and begged to return him his guns, requesting that he would give him one of them as a present; though, being taken in war, he had a perfect right to keep both of them if he had chosen. I believe his request was complied with.

I have spoken of the mountains which are used as

strongholds by the Abyssinians. The following story is told of the means by which the Balgadda got possession of one. The mountain in question by right belonged to him, or to some of his party, but had been left in charge of some priests, who had held it for a length of time, and, having collected there great wealth and vast supplies of provisions, were loth to give it up. Being a most important post to hold, at once as a place of retreat and also as a check on the neighbourhood, every device was attempted by the Balgadda to regain possession of it. Force was, of course, out of the question, as the monks would only have to draw up their rope, and, setting at defiance the best army in the land, hold out for a longer time than any rebel force could venture to beleaguer them. So the Balgadda pretended not to care about it, but cultivated the friendship of its possessors, and even deposited some of his property in their safe keeping; at length, when passing the mountain with his attendants, he expressed a curiosity to visit the convent. His wish, being conveyed to the abbot, was granted on condition that no one should attend him but his "gasha zagry," or shield-bearer—a servant who, like the squire or page of an ancient knight, is accustomed to follow his master everywhere. Accordingly the Balgadda mounted, thus attended, and spent a short time in visiting the place, and talking cheerfully with the monks about sending some more property of his to be taken care of. At length they proposed some refreshment. Araia hesitated, saying that he feared he must be off; he was in a great hurry, &c.; but on being pressed, consented at last

to partake of their hospitality. They regretted, however, that they could only offer him a mutton repast, not having any cattle on the rock. This difficulty was removed by his suggesting that they had only to call to his people for a fat cow, which was below. This the jolly monks did without hesitation, good raw meat being a luxury by no means to be refused. But the cow could not come up or be killed without the usual attendants. The butcher must come for his perquisites, also the knife-cleaner and server for theirs. Then the beer of the convent, though good, was surpassed by the tedge below; so, to please the convivial brethren, a supply (of course accompanied by the tedge melkénia, assalafy, fellàky, &c.) was ordered up; and as their stomachs and good humour became extended, brandy and various other creature comforts were served; at last, even the chief's musicians were summoned to amuse them. Thus a good party of well-armed men found their way up, and all to please the pious monks. At length, however, one of them, perceiving this fact, whispered to his brethren that they had an awkward number of visiters to deal with. But being warmed with food and drink, they heeded him little, and the cautious monk's suspicions were, if not lulled, at least smothered. Araia said nothing that might arouse suspicion or for a moment check their jollity, till, some one proposing that it was almost time to break up, he assumed the manner of a most polite host, and begged them not to think of going so soon—that really they were very early; but that he hoped, if they must go, they would again favour him as soon as conve-

nient with a visit to his mountain, and have another jolly evening. The drunken abbot, monks, and lay brothers stared about them at this rather too polite invitation to their own convent, and to their dismay found that not only had they hauled up a large party themselves, but that these, profiting by their merrymaking, had, in turn, hauled up the whole of their companions. Some began to murmur, some to bluster, some to weep, according to the different stages of drunkenness to which they had respectively attained. The abbot I believe was rather noisy, and declared that he would not go; but the Balgadda cut this short by telling them that he feared he should be obliged to throw them over if they did not choose to go down quietly. Thus he got possession of the mountain.

By the way, I am not sure that I am right in the principal character in my story; whether, indeed, Balgadda Araia figured in it at all, or whether the cunning chief was not Shoum Agamy Weld' Inchaël, Sabagardis's son. Be this as it may, the rest of the story is true, and is very characteristic of the person of whom I have related it.

Towards the end of the year 1841 dissensions arose more strongly than ever between the rival states of Tigré and Amhàra, and Oubi at last openly declared war with Ras Ali. His first step was to march his troops from Mai Tsahlou, in Simyen, to a place called Mariam Wáha, in Woggera, distant from Gondar only about twenty miles. Here he intended to form a junction with the troops of Gojam, commanded by Dejatch

Bourrou, son of their chieftain. I have always heard Bourrou spoken of in the highest terms, not only for his discretion as a general and bravery as a soldier, but also for his disposition, which appears to combine an amiability and a high degree of natural civilisation rather rare among his countrymen; and this character has been given him, not only by Abyssinians, but by those European travellers who may have visited his court. A French traveller, however, and one on whose authority I should place much reliance, thus described him about the period of which we are now speaking:—"He is young, and bears valour written on his lofty brow: his ardent and bold character speaks in his expressive eyes. His is a noble nature, but violent and suspicious."

Oubi had concluded an alliance, offensive and defensive, with this prince; but on his arrival near the spot of meeting, Bourrou, knowing of old that honour in Oubi's mind occupied a place very secondary to interest, hesitated before he marched his troops to Mariam Wàha; and it was not till after repeated pressing entreaties from the one side and excuses from the other had passed between them that he agreed to form a junction of the armies of Gojam and Tigré, on condition that the chief of the latter should in the presence of the Abouna (or patriarch of Æthiopia) swear solemnly to keep to the engagements of the treaty between them. After some hesitation, Oubi, feeling that the alliance of so brave a general and such good troops was not to be hazarded, consented to this rather humiliating step, and took the

oath required of him. Next day the forces of Gojam camped with his. Oubi received Bourrou with all possible honour, and sent him large presents, and still larger compliments, by the hand and mouth of one of his principal men, and shortly after his arrival paid him a visit in person. Unwilling still that the least feeling of doubt should remain between them, he offered him his daughter in marriage. Now this daughter was at that very moment the wife of Ras Ali; but at her father's request, and with a truly Abyssinian want of feeling in these matters, she left him, and took refuge in the sanctuary of Mahedera Mariam. The patriarch, who was at that time with Oubi, easily consented to her being divorced from Ras Ali, and her marriage with Bourrou was soon afterwards celebrated with considerable pomp and great drunkenness.

After the banqueting was over, Oubi called a council of war; and having explained his intentions to his generals, and begged of them to act wisely and valiantly, as they had formerly done, fixed the morrow for marching.

Early in the morning of the 10th of February the allied troops of Tigré and Gojam broke camp. "The king and the patriarch, mounted on richly caparisoned mules, and each holding a parasol in his hand, advanced at the head of the main body of the army. Ten squires and twelve priests marched on either side of them; the latter distinguishable by their sacerdotal turbans, the former armed with shields, glittering with plates of silver. Behind them came the royal household,—the

women, eunuchs, asmaris or singers, the buffoon; and then the main body of the army, followed immediately by the baggage, &c."

This is a description of their route given by a traveller then in the Amhàra country. The combined army amounted to nearly twenty thousand strong. They were brave, and, for Abyssinians, well disciplined; or, as that word is scarcely applicable to irregular troops, I should say that they were led by good men; and a considerable sprinkling of them were pretty skilful in the use of fire-arms. Moreover, they fought on the side of their religion, as they believed; for Ras Ali had been spoken of as a Mussulman, and a supporter of that religion. The priests too, with the patriarch himself, marched at their head, carrying with them the holy books and the crosses and incense-bowls. Thus they might be looked upon as invincible. After three days' march they took up their position in the neighbourhood of Devra Tabor, the very centre of the enemy's country.

When the Ras heard of this sudden invasion of his territories, he collected together his troops with the utmost expedition; but the Tigré army had rested above a week before they saw anything of him. At length, however, the two armies lay encamped opposite to each other. It would appear that the Ras did not altogether relish the formidable appearance of his enemies, for before coming to an engagement he did everything in his power to arrange the business peaceably. He sent messengers to the patriarch, begging of him, as would be-

come his holy office, to use his influence in preserving peace between the different parts of the kingdom of which he was the spiritual father. Moreover, he offered, that, if either he or any of the clergy should entertain doubts of his attachment to the Christian religion, he would willingly be baptized in public a second time. The Abouna, however, with the small amount of wisdom, Christian feeling, and temper which he has invariably shown, replied to him only with bullying threats, little becoming his position in the Church, and which, indeed, would have been disgraceful to any professor of Christianity. He said that the Ras was an infidel, and as such he could hold no communication with him; and that, should the party of Oubi gain the day, he would cause molten lead to be poured into the ears of all the prisoners who might be taken.

At such an answer Ali of course could but make up his mind to strive to the utmost. The battle was begun with great fury on both sides; but the Amhàra, who were the attackers, could not meet the fire of the Tigré gunners; and Dejatch Bourrou, profiting by their indecision, charged through them bravely, and fired their camp. Shétou (Oubi's second son) also behaved, on the side he commanded, with the utmost gallantry; and in a short time the troops of the Ras fled in disorder, their chief having already set them a very good example, by being the first to take himself out of danger. The combined forces pursued the fugitives for some distance; but strange fortune, or rather absurd stupidity, attended Oubi. Aligaz Bourrou, a near relation of Ras

Ali's, when he found his party defeated, fled at once with his attendants to the Tigré camp, and, presenting himself before Oubi, whom he found nearly alone, begged that he might become his prisoner, in preference to receiving perhaps ill treatment at the hands of the soldiery. Oubi, who was very tipsy at the time, was frightened at the sight of a party of the enemy in his camp, and asked for quarter. The Amhàra chief requested that he might be bound, but not killed. Oubi returned the compliment, asking the same favour at his hands; till, at last, Aligaz Bourrou, unable to make him understand how matters stood, took him at his word, and made him his prisoner. Imagine the disgust of the victors, on their return, at finding that, though they had conquered, the day was lost!

Some say that this is not the true version of the story,—that the Amhàra chief was flying for refuge to a sanctuary, but, seeing that Oubi was only slightly attended, made him his prisoner by a *coup de main*. Be this as it may, the day was won and lost by the Tigréans. The Ras had fled, wholly unaccompanied, and no one knew whither; while Oubi, the victor, was prisoner. The fugitive Galla, on hearing the news, returned, and fell upon their victors; and taking them unexpectedly, while engaged in plundering, easily overcame them. Then followed a scene of massacre and mutilation too horrible to relate. Meanwhile the Ras was for eight days invisible; and it was not till the expiration of this period that he was discovered in a convent, where he had taken refuge. During his flight he

had undergone several hardships,—had been compelled to travel some distance on foot, and had received a good thrashing from a countryman, of whom he had asked hospitality. The man beat him on the supposition of his being an ordinary soldier, and out of revenge for some ill-treatment he had received at the hands of a party on a former occasion: but when he exclaimed, "I am the Ras!" the man redoubled his blows, saying, that if such were the case he had also some debts of oppression to settle.

When the first news of Ali's unhoped-for good fortune reached him he treated the story as a trick, played upon him by the enemy, to lure him from his retreat; nor would he believe the truth of the statement until he had received the information from numerous parties of various ranks and nations. He arrived at Devra Tabor quite unexpected by his generals (many of whom had considered him dead), and found the chiefs in consultation, some doubt having arisen as to who should succeed him. His appearance, however, of course put an end to these speculations, and his first act was to reward most liberally those of his soldiers who had distinguished themselves for courage or fidelity in the trying moments which had just passed. Among others, Oubi's country was given to his own brother Marso, who had fought on Ali's side.

Shortly after this Ali proceeded in state to the tent of the Aboun, before whom he presented himself in the most humble attitude, praying for his blessing. The patriarch at first excused himself, alleging that he could

not, as a Christian priest, invoke the blessings of Heaven in behalf of a supporter of Mohammedanism. Ali protested that such was far from his character, and that he had been most grossly calumniated by all who had thus reported of him. As a proof of the truth of this assertion, the Aboun demanded of him the liberty of Oubi, who, he said, fought not against the Ras, but only as a champion of Christianity. After some days' reflection Ali consented, and ordered that Oubi should be brought to his tent; and on his appearing, he invited him to sit with him and dine, adding, however—"But I forget; you may have prejudices which would prevent your dining with a man whom you consider as a Mohammedan." Oubi admitted that he had been led to regard Ali as such, but that he was convinced of his error, and regretted it. When by good eating and drinking every one present seemed to be in excellent humour, Oubi begged to be allowed to ransom himself. Much to his astonishment, Ali, with very little hesitation, agreed to receive the sum of two thousand dollars (about 400*l*.). I have been told that the shock occasioned by such unexpected success was so great, that Oubi was seized with a fit, from which he was with difficulty recovered. In addition to his liberty, Ali restored to him his former kingdom, which he had just given to his brother.

Oubi, with all haste, collected a few hundred soldiers, and, setting off for Simyen, took the mountain of Hai, in which he had the greater portion of his treasures, before Marso had thought it worth while to look after

the safety of his newly-acquired country, or had posted a single guard in any of the passes. This has before been mentioned in the history of Oubi's family, and also how he was obliged to have recourse to Ali's assistance to turn his brother out from Simyen. Marso indeed fought most bravely, and, after losing the battle, succeeded in cutting his way through the enemy's line, and, reaching Waldabba, took sanctuary there. He afterwards had his head shaved, and, dressed in the costume of a monk, made his way to the Itcheggy Beit, or quarter of sanctuary, at Gondar, where he might remain in safety until something should turn up.

The fact of his having been obliged to seek the aid of his conqueror in nowise tended to raise the opinion of Oubi's power in the minds of his former subjects: accordingly, within a very short time of his return, several of the principal chieftains of Tigré rose in rebellion against him. Teddily Hailo, chief of Tsagaddy, was one of the first of these. He had fought for Oubi at Devra Tabor, and, after his defeat, had shared his prison.

When Oubi obtained his liberty from the Ras, Hailo begged of him to procure the sum demanded for *his* ransom. But Oubi, it appears, had some cause to be dissatisfied with the suppliant, and refused him most insultingly, remarking that his skin was not worth half his ransom. Of course, the chief was not by any means pleased with this answer, and determined to be revenged on his prince as soon as opportunity offered. Accordingly, some time after, his friends having collected the

required sum, and he being set at liberty, he set off at once for Walkait and Tsagaddy, and raised the people against Oubi, openly declaring himself in revolt.

Balgadda Araia and the Nebrid Welda Selassy, whom Oubi, when going to war with Ali, had left governors of the provinces east of the Taccazy, profited by the example and opportunity given them by Hailo, and resolved to shake off the Amhàra yoke. Thus, surrounded on all sides by enemies, and his troops few in number and fatigued by war, it appeared impossible that Oubi could ever hope to succeed in re-establishing himself in his country. Had the Tigré people joined with common consent under one leader, nothing could have saved him; but these people have always been celebrated for the foolish manner in which they have invariably allowed petty jealousies to mar their great national prospects.

Garra Raphaël, chief of Temben and Garra Alta, of whom I have occasionally spoken before, was a man of great courage and some talents, but one who followed more the manners of a brigand than of a soldier. As soon as the attention of the Balgadda, who had hitherto kept him in check, was diverted to the movements of Oubi, this chief began to harass the country in his rear, and, by degrees collecting a considerable force, compelled Araia to look to his own safety at home before he ventured to lead his troops across the frontier. A sort of irregular system of skirmishing was for a long time carried on between them, Garra Raphaël never allowing himself to be drawn into a general action. At length

one of his mountains fell into the hands of the opposing force, and the brigand thought that his best policy would be to form an alliance with the Balgadda, and together march against the common enemy. He accordingly sent some priests to the hostile camp to propose the terms of the treaty. These were agreed to by Araia, with the addition that Garra Raphaël should present himself before him and declare his submission.

These preliminaries being consented to, the meeting of the two chiefs was appointed to take place at the Rock Church of Howzayn, the principal town of Garra Alta. There, before the Cross, which is believed to have miraculously descended from heaven, and in the presence of the priests and of their own attendants, each party swore most solemnly to maintain the agreement entered upon between them. The priests pronounced the ban of the Church, by a most terrible excommunication, on him who should break the oath thus solemnly taken; and the two chiefs, after a cordial embrace, marched together to the plain of Hatzabo, near Axum, where they had appointed to form a junction with the troops of the Nebrid Welda Selassy. But Garra Raphaël's former habits had been such as to render his present secondary position by no means suited to his taste. The consequence was, that in less than a month he had so far forgotten his oath as to join in and become chief of a deep-laid conspiracy, which was to subvert all rule in the country. The Balgadda, having information of this plot, decided that the best thing he could do was to strike at once at the root. Accordingly, on some

pretence or other, he called together a council of the principal men of his army. Garra Raphaël, suspecting nothing, came among the rest; but no sooner had he entered the tent than persons stationed on purpose near the door seized upon him, and, notwithstanding his resolute resistance, succeeded in binding him hand and foot, which being done, he was dragged away, and given over to the keeping of two of his greatest personal enemies. These men had received orders from the Balgadda that their prisoner should be conveyed to a mountain called Arara; but whether this order was intended to be acted upon, or whether it was only given in public, and counter-ordered in private, is a matter of question. Their conduct, however, seems to warrant the latter supposition. The prisoner was conducted for some distance in the direction of his supposed destination; but at night the party halted at a house which was built in a lonely spot remote from any village. Here a blacksmith was ordered to thrust hot irons into the eyes of the victim, who was afterwards killed. His guards then returned to the camp at Hatzabo.

It is said that Garra Raphaël bore his cruel sentence with the stoicism of an American Indian, not a groan betraying the sufferings which he endured. He expired calling out his war-cry of "Abba Shamma," and reproaching his murderers for their cowardly treatment of him. When his executioners returned to the camp they demanded audience of the Balgadda; but this was refused them; and he even expressed horror at the deed which they had committed: whether, however, he was

privy to it or no is not positively known, though the people of Tigré commonly believe such to have been the case.

During the lifetime of Garra Raphaël he was feared and hated by the people for his plundering disposition; but all took his part after he had been murdered: even to this day he is highly spoken of as a brave man, and distinguished for his extreme liberality to his soldiers. The party of Balgadda became disliked, and Garra Raphaël was looked upon as a martyr to the independence of his country; although, in reality, it is more than probable that, like those of many supposed patriots, his plot tended more to his own aggrandisement than to the national welfare.

All these differences and dissensions among the Tigréans were of the greatest service to Oubi, who was employing the rainy season, which had just set in, in making preparations for a campaign. He had emissaries everywhere,—some employed in purchasing friends among the people of Tigré, others in collecting through the different parts of the Amhàra and Galla country the guns which he had lost at Devra Tabor. Nor were his precautions taken in vain; for when the dry season arrived he crossed the Taccazy, and in a short time became entire master of all the provinces of Tigré.

This brings us to within a year or two of my arrival in Abyssinia; and Oubi's subsequent history will be gleaned from different parts of the book.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SUPERSTITIONS RELATING TO PERSONS POSSESSED OF THE DEVIL.

THE Abyssinians in general believe that the devil is allowed considerable power over mankind, not only in tempting them to sin, but also in annoying them grievously by possessing them, after the manner in which persons were possessed in the ancient times of the Jews. This is my notion of the matter; though they themselves do not altogether give the devil his due, calling his handiwork that of the "Bouda" in some cases, and of "Tigritiya" in others, according to the symptoms of the patient. It will be a rather long task to explain the workings of these malignant spirits, their natures and origin, and the mode of their expulsion; but as such relations are interesting to many, I shall at once begin with the Bouda, being more intimately acquainted with him than the other, from having seen above a hundred cases of his work, and only a few of Tigritiya.

In Abyssinia the trade of blacksmith is hereditary, and considered as more or less disgraceful, from the fact that blacksmiths are, with very rare exceptions, believed to be all sorcerers, and are opprobriously called "Bouda." They are supposed to have the power of turning them-

selves into hyænas, and sometimes into other animals. I remember a story of some little girls who, having been out in the forest to gather sticks, came running back breathless with fright; and on being asked what was the cause, they answered that a blacksmith of the neighbourhood had met them, and, entering into conversation with him, they at length began to joke him about whether, as had been asserted, he could really turn himself into a hyæna. The man, they declared, made no reply, but taking some ashes, which he had with him, tied up in the corner of his cloth, sprinkled them over his shoulders, and to their horror and alarm they began almost immediately to perceive that the metamorphosis was actually taking place, and that the blacksmith's skin was assuming the hair and colour of the hyæna, while his limbs and head took the shape of that animal. When the change was complete he grinned and laughed at them, and then retired into the neighbouring thickets. They had remained, as it were, rooted to the place from sheer fright; but the moment the hideous creature withdrew they made the best of their way home.

Few people will venture to molest or offend a blacksmith, fearing the effects of his resentment. The greater part of the "possessed" are women; and the reason of their being attacked is often that they have despised the proffered love of some Bouda, or for other similar cause. Men however are by no means exempt; and of this I have seen several instances.

It is a custom in Abyssinia to conceal the real name by which a person is baptized, and to call him only by a

sort of nickname, which his mother gives him on leaving the church. The baptismal names in Abyssinia are those of saints; such as Son of St. George, Slave of the Virgin, Daughter of Moses, &c. Those given by the mother are generally expressive of maternal vanity regarding the appearance or anticipated merits of her child. They are such as gold, silver, joy, sweetness, &c. The reason for the concealment of the Christian name is, that the Bouda cannot act upon a person whose real name he does not know. Should he however have obtained the true name of his victim, he takes a particular kind of straw, and, muttering something over it, bends it into a circle, and places it under a stone. The person thus doomed is taken ill at the very moment of the bending of the straw; and should it by accident snap under the operation, the result of the attack will be that the patient will die.

This malady and the Tigritiya are no doubt often purposely counterfeited by servant-maids to evade their work, or by others to excite pity, attract attention, and get themselves pulled about by the men. Still, as many real cases, wherein the symptoms have been as absurd as in the false ones, have terminated in death, one is led to inquire whether the patient's mind could have been affected, and whether, from having frequently seen similar farces acted, the parties have not in their delusion acted likewise. I had better cite a few instances of my own experience to bear on both sides of the question, and leave my readers to form their own opinion.

The first case which I ever saw, and which I conse-

quently watched very attentively and noted down, was that of a servant-woman at Rohabaita. The first day she complained of general languor, and of a stupid heavy feeling about the head. Towards evening this seemed to increase, when she cried a little, but was perfectly reasonable, and excused herself by saying that it was only because she felt low and melancholy. An hour after this, however, she burst out into hysterical laughter, and complained of violent pain in the stomach and bowels. It was at this stage that the other servants began to suspect that she was under the influence of the Bouda. In a short time she became quiet, and by degrees sank into a state of lethargy, approaching to insensibility. Either from excellent acting and great fortitude, or from real want of feeling, the various experiments which we made on her seemed to have no more effect than they would have had on a mesmeric somnambulist.* We pinched her repeatedly; but pinch as hard as we could, she never moved a muscle of her face, nor did she otherwise express the least sensation. I held a bottle of strong sal volatile under her nose, and stopped her mouth; and this having no effect, I steeped some rag in it and placed it in her nostrils; but, although I would wager any amount that she had never either seen, smelt, or heard of such a preparation as liquid ammonia, it had no more effect on her than rose-water. She held her thumbs tightly bent inside her hands, as if to prevent their being seen. On my observing this to

* Many of the symptoms seem nearly to resemble those in ordinary cases of *epilepsy*.

a bystander, he told me that the thumbs were the Bouda's particular perquisite, and that he would allow no person to take them. Consequently, several persons tried to open her hand and get at them, but she resisted with what appeared to me wonderful strength for a girl, and bit their fingers till in more than one instance she drew blood. I, among others, made the attempt, and, though I got a bite or two for my pains, yet either the devil had great respect for me as an Englishman and a good Christian, or she had for me as her master, for the biting was all a sham, and struck me as more like kissing than anything else, compared with the fearful wounds she had inflicted on the rest of the party.

I had a string of ornamental amulets which I usually wore, having on it many charms for various maladies; but I was perfectly aware that none for the Bouda was among them. Still, hoping thereby to expose the cheat, I asserted that there was a very celebrated one, and laid the whole string on her face, expecting that she would pretend to feel the effects, and act accordingly; but, to my surprise and disappointment, she remained quite motionless. Several persons had been round the village to look for some talisman, but only one was found. On its being applied to her mouth she for an instant sprang up, bit at it, and tore it, but then laughed, and said it was weak, and would not vex *him*. I here use the masculine gender, because, although the patient was a woman, the Bouda is supposed to speak through her medium; and, of whatever sex they be, the sufferers, or rather the spirits, when speaking of themselves, invariably use that

gender. I deluged her with bucketfuls of water, but could not even elicit from her a start or a pant, an effect usually produced by water suddenly dashed over a person. At night she could not sleep, but became more restless, and spoke several times. She once remarked, in her natural tone of voice, that she was not ill, nor attacked by the Bouda, but merely wished to return to Adoua. She said this so naturally that I was completely taken off my guard, and told her that of course she might go, but that she must wait till the morrow. The other people smiled, and whispered me that it was only a device of the Bouda's to get her out into the forest, and there devour her.

Singular coincidences not unfrequently occur in such a way as to encourage superstitious persons in their credulity; and, strange to say, that very night, for the first and last time that I ever heard him during my stay at Rohabaita, the hyæna kept howling and laughing close to the village. This animal, as well as the jackal, is very common in the populous districts of Abyssinia, where he finds plenty of offal, but he seldom troubles himself to visit these desolate and almost uninhabited regions: consequently, his appearance that evening was hailed by all the people with a feeling of horror, as they doubtless connected it with the woman's sickness. I was regarded, even by my own servants, as a man devoid of all sensibility, because I ventured to smile at the idea, and to treat the whole matter as an imposture. So completely indeed were they overcome, that they forgot all their respect for me; and one or two

of them did not scruple to express their opinion to my face.

At night I ordered the people to close the door of the hut, and lie across it, some inside and some out. These precautions, however, did not satisfy them; and they insisted on having the young woman bound hand and foot, as the only means of preventing her escape. She lay pretty still, only moaning and occasionally starting up when the hyæna called. I was lying on a couch, she and the other people on the floor. Determined to see the issue of the affair, I watched her narrowly, and when the guard dropped off to sleep, one by one, I pretended to do so likewise. She also was perfectly still for near an hour, and I fancied that she too had fallen asleep, when suddenly, the hyæna calling close by, she to my astonishment rose without her bonds, which I myself had seen, as I imagined, securely fastened. She then crept on all-fours towards the door, which she succeeded in partly opening. I was just going to spring on her when one of the heavily-sleeping guards made a noise, which sounded something like a grunt or a snore, and it appeared to me that she stifled a laugh. This led me to believe more and more that she was shamming, but I said nothing, and she returned of her own accord to her place. Although she did not sleep during the whole night, yet she remained still as long as the people were quiet, only moaning a little whenever any one, by yawning or otherwise, showed signs of waking. Next day she appeared a little better, and talked more rationally, but still very

wildly, and would neither eat nor drink. Once we allowed her to leave the hut for a moment, on pretence of necessity, and she went out quietly enough; but her return being delayed longer than we considered right, parties were sent out in quest of her, and after a long search she was discovered at more than a mile from the hut, and making for the thickest of the jungle.

The second night was passed much as the former one; but the following day we prevailed on her to take a little bread. On swallowing a piece about the size of a nut she immediately vomited; and the drinking of water was attended with a similar result. A better night seemed to do her good, for on the following day she managed to eat a little, and by slow degrees she recovered her health.

If this were a trick, as doubtless all my readers will declare it to have been, I would only ask what she gained by it? for beyond making a little bread, and occasionally a dish or two of cookery, she had no work to do—at any rate nothing that could induce her to prefer three days' confinement, with plenty of pinches, cords, and drenching with cold water, without a moment's sleep, and, worse than all to any Abyssinian, total abstinence from food and drink!

This being the first case I witnessed, I noted it down minutely; but as the charms failed to do their work, which is to make the spirit speak, scarce half of the principal features of the malady were displayed. The people all agreed that it was providential the straw did not break when the blacksmith was working the charm;

for, having procured no antidote, she must assuredly have died had it done so.

Since this occurrence I have witnessed many hoaxes easy to discover, but also many which I could never see through, although I tried every method that my small stock of ingenuity could invent.

I remember once a poor weakly girl on whom I had tried several false charms, but without her moving. She was lying, apparently senseless, in the inner court of a house at Adoua, and numbers of persons were passing to and fro to see her, when, suddenly starting up, she screamed and struggled with so much strength, that, on seizing her by the legs and shoulders, I and three other powerful men could scarcely keep her down. A man near me said, "I am sure some one has with him a strong charm: if so, let him produce it." All denied the fact; but just then a stranger entered from the outer court, when she cried out, "Let me alone, and I will speak." This man was an Amhàra soldier, perfectly unknown to all of us, but who, hearing one of our people inquire for charms in a house where he was drinking, had volunteered to try the one which he wore, and which he declared to be a very potent one. On placing the amulet near her, she yelled and screamed horribly. The owner (addressing her as a woman) said, "Will you declare yourself if I take it away?" She howled still more at this insult, as she called it, and said, "I am no woman." The question was then repeated several times in the masculine, but she invariably attempted to evade a direct answer, till, as if

worn out, she exclaimed, "I will tell all; only take it far from me!" It was accordingly removed to some distance from her, and she immediately sank down as if exhausted.

Now, no one who has not witnessed some specimens of this (we will call it) humbug can judge how admirably the supposed sufferers act their parts. I can assure the reader that in my judgment no professional actor on our London boards could hold a candle to them. The sudden change from the frantic rage which is expressed when the antidote is offered, to the perfect appearance of both mental and bodily prostration which ensues on its being removed, and *vice versâ*, is acted to nature; and I would defy the most incredulous and matter-of-fact person in the world to witness it without feeling at least a considerable degree of astonishment.

How these deceptions, if such they be, should have been practised, doubtless for centuries, in all parts of Abyssinia, and also in Sennàr, where the Bouda exercises his power under the title of Sahàr, without their fallacy having ever become public, is to me also a matter of wonder.

But to return to the patient, whom we left lying in a state of semi-animation. The persons round her questioned her, first asking *his* name (always, for fear of offending, addressing her as a man). She answered in the language peculiar to the Bouda, and which all the afflicted seem to speak. The bystanders could not, of course, comprehend it, probably because it was gibberish. Still some words were recognised as those usually uttered

in such cases, though their meaning was unknown. She was then threatened with a reproduction of the charm, if she persisted in her obstinacy; at which menace she trembled violently, and promised to answer in an intelligible language. The question being repeated, she said, "I am such a one, son of such a one, of such a place," mentioning the name and village of a supposed Bouda. By degrees she was compelled to state the motives of the persecution, and to declare by her own mouth that the woman (herself) must die if the proper remedy was not procured. And then came a severe battle to know what was to be this expulsory antidote. At last this, too, was wormed from her and procured. Then the Bouda, anxious to delay his exit as long as possible, demanded food (as he always does) before leaving her. A basin was fetched, in which was put a quantity of any filth that could be found (of fowls, dogs, &c.), and mixed up with a little water and some ashes. I took the basin myself, and hid it where I was positive she could not see me place it, and covered it up with some loose stones which were heaped in the corner. The Bouda was then told that his supper was prepared, and the woman rose and crawled down the court on all fours, smelling like a dog on either side, till, passing into the yard where the basin was, she went straight up to it, and, grubbing it out from the place where it was hidden, devoured its abominable contents with the utmost greediness. The Bouda was then supposed to leave her, and she fell to the ground, as if fainting. From this state she recovered her health in a few days.

I had forgotten to mention that one of the principal symptoms is a great longing for charcoal, of which the patient will eat any quantity she can obtain. The first proof of the devil's leaving her is her allowing her thumbs to be taken hold of.

One of my servants, who, by the great anxiety he showed in watching and tending the patients, was evidently convinced of the truth of their sufferings, had himself been attacked many years before, and assured me that after his recovery he had not the slightest recollection of anything that had taken place while the fit was on him, but that his friends had told him all about it. How was it possible that this man, supposing his own illness to have been feigned, could be cheated by the same means?

What most astonished me was the way that the talisman seemed to act. It is generally some sort of root, with occasionally a bit of hyæna's skin, sewn up in a small morocco case. I have more than once concealed one under my clothes, and, going up behind the patient's head, touched her with it. No sooner was this done than she started up frantically, although dozens of persons were pulling her about in every direction at the same moment.

Just as often, however, have I detected impostures. I had once a great strapping wench for a cook. She was as strong as a camel, rather good-looking, and an uncommonly willing servant; so that I was sorry to hear one fine evening that she had been attacked by the Evil One. I could not help laughing at the idea of what a

job we should have to master her, especially as I had seen little weak emaciated creatures cause considerable trouble to four or five strong men. But, from a hint of my black servant Saïd I found that he had given her a taste of the whip that afternoon. The fact was, that the naughty girl had, contrary to the prejudices of her country, allowed herself to become his sweetheart, he being a Mussulman and she a Christian; and the whipping was the issue of a lovers' quarrel. Judging by all this that her malady was the work of a very mischievous little devil, called Cupid, and not of the Bouda—in fact, that she was merely shamming, for the purpose of exciting her cruel lover's sympathy—I determined to act accordingly. Poor girl! she sadly overrated the tenderness of her amoroso. He, as usual, half drunk, began to laugh at her, and, calling her camel, buffalo, and other endearing names, requested her in no very polite manner to get up and prepare him some supper. I, for my part, believing that the woman was not likely at once to admit that she was playing us a hoax, put a serious face on the matter, and proposed to try a very efficacious remedy, which, as I said, the son of Oubi had given me on my last visit to the camp. Accordingly, going to my room, I pulled two or three bits of dry bamboo-roots from the hut, and wrapped them carefully in a piece of paper, together with an old leaf or two, some pipe-ashes, and a bit of hair which I cut from the tail of my faithful dog Maychal Boggo. Proceeding then to the place where the sufferer lay, I ordered a large-mouthed jar to be filled with dry mules'-dung and lighted. When this

had been done, and the smoke began to rise in clouds, I put into it a small quantity of my charm, with every appearance of caution and care; which done, we seized the unfortunate victim, and with some difficulty forced her head close to the jar's mouth, and then rolled a quarry round it and the jar, so as at once to keep her fast, and prevent the escape of the smallest quantity of smoke. As may be imagined, in a moment she began to cough violently, and at last, being almost suffocated, cried out, "Let me off, for pity's sake; I am not ill, but only shamming!" I solemnly asserted this to be only a device of the Evil One to get away from the charm, and held on, till her cries for pity, for the sake of the Virgin, of Oubi, &c., becoming more confused and her cough more violent, I feared lest she might suffer too much if kept longer. On being liberated she presented a deplorable appearance. Her cough continued for some time; her eyes were bloodshot and streaming with tears; and the shame she felt at the *dénouement* was not at all lessened by the jeers of her fellow-servants, and by my telling her that as I had discovered so good a medicine I should not fail to use it on all occasions, and moreover by my delivering to her especial charge the jar of smoking dung which had wrought so wonderful a cure. That magic vessel was preserved in a conspicuous situation in the hut where the women worked till I left the place; and I must say that the attacks of Bouda were less frequent after this occurrence than before; though still I had occasional cases where the sunken eye and vacant stare cheated me into tenderness of heart, and I refrained

from the use of my singular but most efficacious remedy.

Many cases have been related to me, wherein the friends of the possessed, having procured charms of sufficient power to force the spirit to declare his name and residence, but not equal to turning him out, went at once to the place indicated, and, seizing on the blacksmith, brought him forcibly to their home, where, having fed him well, he was commanded to quit his victim, and at the same time his life was threatened, lances being pointed at his breast.

In the neighbourhood of Adoua there is a story current of a woman who had one foot natural, and in the place of the other the hoof of a donkey. I have frequently made inquiries respecting this story; and in answer, several persons have assured me that they had themselves seen the monstrosity; while others, though they could not boast of having been eye-witnesses of the fact, firmly believed in the truth of the account, having heard it related by many credible persons. The story, which is illustrative of another species of power attributed to the Bouda, was as follows:—

The woman, having died, had been buried with all due ceremony in the churchyard. Next day a man came to one of the priests, who I suppose was a bad man, such indeed being occasionally found in holy orders, and offered him a sum of money for the body, pledging himself to the strictest secrecy. The priest doubtless thought that, as the body could not be of use to any one else, there could be no harm in his making it useful

to himself by the gain of an honest penny, especially as nobody was to know what had occurred. The bargain was accordingly concluded to the satisfaction of both parties, and the corpse was disinterred and carried off by the stranger. Nothing more transpired, nor indeed did these facts become known, until some time after. The stranger, who was a blacksmith, was in the habit of passing, on his way to market, the house where the departed old woman's family lived. After her death he had been seen to ride or drive a remarkably fine donkey, which, strangely enough, on passing the house or any of the old lady's children, brayed loudly, and endeavoured to run towards them. At first no notice was taken of this singular propensity, but at last one of the sons (a fine, intelligent young man) exclaimed, "I feel convinced that that ass is my mother!" Accordingly, Bouda, ass, and all were seized and brought to the hut, much to the apparent satisfaction of the quadruped, who rubbed her nose against the young men, and, if I was rightly informed, shed tears of joy on the occasion. On being charged with the offence, the Bouda at first pretended to make light of it, denying the accusation as absurd; but at last, by dint of threats and promises, he was induced to confess the facts I have related, and how he had by his art turned the old woman into a donkey, she having been not really dead, but in a trance, into which he had purposely thrown her. His power, he said, was sufficient to change the external appearance, but not to alter the mind of his subject. Hence it was that the old woman,

or rather donkey, possessed human feelings, which she had displayed in her endeavours to enter her former habitation, and in her recognition of her children. The Bouda moreover agreed to restore to her her human appearance, and began his exorcism. As he proceeded, she by degrees assumed her natural form, and the change appeared to be complete, when one of the sons, blinded by his rage, forgot the promises of pardon which the Bouda had exacted from them all, and drove his spear through his heart. Alas, for impatience! The incantation not being entirely completed, one foot yet remained asinine, and continued so until her death actually occurred, which was not till many years afterwards.

Dejatch Oubi, who enjoys the reputation of being far superior to most of his countrymen in his abundance of intellect and his superiority to superstition, appears to believe firmly in the power of the Bouda. On one occasion he gave a most striking proof of his faith; for, a soldier dying shortly after the name and residence of his tormentor had been extorted from him, the unfortunate blacksmith, thus described, was seized by order of the Prince, and, after some investigation of the matter, condemned, with part of his family, to be put to death. I forget how they were killed, but have an impression that they were thrown into a pit, in which a large fire had been lighted, and burned to death.

A rather amusing way of turning this art into a more profitable and less offensive line of business than killing people, or making them sick, or even turning them into beasts of burden, is told of two brothers who

lived in some part of Gojam. One of them, having submitted to be turned into a horse, ass, or cow, was sold by his brother at the market, and conducted by his purchaser out of the town. As soon however as night closed the eyes of his new master, the Bouda resumed his humanity, and walked quietly home. It so often occurred that one or other of the brothers sold some animal in the market, that people began to inquire whence their cattle were obtained, as they were never known to keep any stock, nor even to have any beast in their yard till the day of sale arrived. Still more extraordinary in the eyes of the suspicious was the fact that every animal they sold made its escape the same night, and was never more heard of. At last, a soldier or chief, rather more ingenious than the rest, and probably with his wits sharpened by the fact of his having already been taken in twice, determined to risk his money a third time, in hopes of discovering the fraud. Accordingly, one market-day he bought a very fine-looking horse from one of the brothers, and took it away with him. Instead however of allowing him to wait till night should favour his escape, no sooner was he outside the town than he drove his lance through the heart of his new purchase, and returned to the town to watch the effects which the news might produce on the seller. Meeting him as it were accidentally, he told him (cursing his own heat of temper) how he had in a passion killed the beautiful animal he had just bought of him. The Bouda started, but managed to conceal his emotion till he arrived at home, when, closing the door, he gave

vent to his lamentations, wailing and rubbing the skin off his forehead, as is customary at the death of a near relation. On being questioned by the neighbours as to the cause of his grief, he replied that news had reached him of the death of his brother, who he said had been robbed and murdered in the Galla country, whither he had gone some few days before in quest of horses. Whether his or my version of the story be true, I pretend not to say; but I was assured that he never again offered animals for sale in the market.

So much for the Bouda. The "Tigritiya" is his near relation, but generally a far more disagreeable and dangerous devil than he. His dependents are supposed to be found in great numbers in Gojam, which province indeed is celebrated for sorcerers of all kinds. I am not sure whether the blacksmiths exercise this art as well as the former one, but believe not. Strange to say, I find nothing in my notes about its origin; and my usually faithful memory has failed me on this point.

As the influence of Tigritiya, like that of Bouda, is more frequently felt by women than by men, it has happened that the one or two cases which I have witnessed have been among the fair sex. I shall therefore speak of the patient in the feminine gender, though one is required to be more cautious in thus addressing her than even in cases of Bouda; for with the latter the consequences are that the male spirit waxes rather sulky, and refuses to answer your questions, while in a case of Tigritiya it often happens that this mistake of the sex may cause a patient apparently recovering to

go into a frenzy, and relapse into her worst state. This malady is of less frequent occurrence than the other, and is not only more dangerous, but also more difficult of explanation. The first symptoms usually are the gradual wasting away of the attacked person, without any cause being apparent either to herself or her relatives. At last, however, after dieting and the ordinary medicines have been unsuccessfully tried, it becomes a matter of suspicion to her friends, who determine on ascertaining whether or no she be afflicted with this devil. The first thing to be observed is to feed her daintily and dress her neatly. As her complaint and this treatment advance, she becomes peevish and fretful, and is always longing for something or other. Whatever she demands must be procured, else she will become sulky, and, covering up her head, remain sometimes for days without eating or speaking. Ornaments of all kinds require to be borrowed for her, often at much trouble to her unfortunate relations: for she is rarely satisfied unless she gets an assortment of those worn by both sexes, even to the lion's skin of a warrior; and these are frequently almost impossible to procure. With some persons it is necessary to have recourse to music before the real cause of their complaint can be discovered. Drums and other musical instruments are collected outside the chamber door, and the musicians suddenly strike up all together, when the patient is not expecting it. If her illness be of an ordinary kind she will of course beg of them to desist, but, if possessed, she will leap or fall from her couch to the ground,

and commence shrugging her shoulders and swinging her head to and fro in time with the music; beginning with a slight movement, but gradually increasing in pace as she appears to become excited, till at last her motions are so violent that a spectator is led to fear for the safety of her neck. It is truly wonderful to see a sick person whom you have just beheld stretched on a bed, a weak, emaciated bag of bones, apparently without strength to rise, keeping up this very fatiguing motion with a velocity and power of endurance that would be astonishing even in an ordinarily strong person. On the music's ceasing she rests, and then begins to speak, telling *his* name (that is, the devil's) and his family; and it is usually after this that she demands the trinkets, specifying each article that she requires, and making their production the condition of her dancing again. She, as I before said, generally contrives to name objects that are most difficult to obtain, such as the silver-ornamented velvet worn only by great war-chiefs; and much sorrow and trouble does this cause to her relations, for she will not be persuaded to show any signs of animation if a single article she has named be not forthcoming; and on her dancing and singing is supposed chiefly to depend her chance of recovery.

The Abyssinians, when startled or alarmed, are in the habit of exclaiming, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!"—as a Roman Catholic would cross himself if similarly situated. Great care must be taken to avoid using these words in the presence of a possessed person, when she is in an ani-

mated or dancing fit; for even to whisper them to oneself would assuredly cause a terrible convulsion and entire relapse of the sufferer. A friend of mine cautioned me against this while we were going together to visit a sick person. He told me that once, hearing that there was an extraordinary case in a village where he was a perfect stranger, he went to the place, and found a lady engaged in dancing amid a crowd of her friends. No sooner did he approach than she sprang towards him, and ordered him to dance with her; at the same time filling her mouth with milk from a can near her, she spirted it into his face. Naturally startled by this unexpected reception, and being a man of decidedly nervous temperament, my poor friend, not approving of this proximity of the devil, ejaculated the fatal words. Scarcely, however, had they passed his lips, when the woman, uttering a terrific scream, threw herself on the ground and tore off all her clothes and ornaments, while her husband, who also, it appears, was more or less affected by the Tigritiya, drew his shotel, and made a ferocious attack on the unwitting offender. The bystanders prevented him from doing mischief, but even they considered that my friend's fault deserved some punishment, and so held him fast till they should decide on his fate. The woman was raised from the ground, where she lay kicking and foaming at the mouth, and was carried to her house, whither also the prisoner was led. A consultation was then held as to what punishment he merited, which, from the tone of the majority, appeared likely to be very severe; and many of the party were of opinion

that, even after he had suffered for this offence, he should still be kept prisoner and put to death, if in a certain time the patient did not recover. Luckily, however, while the consultation was yet going on, the chief of the village, who had heard of the disturbance, came in to ascertain the cause of it, which being fully explained, and the prisoner telling him that he was a defterer or scribe in the service of the bishop (which latter clause was, however, untrue), the chief commanded that he should immediately be set at liberty, remarking that it was not only probable but even right that a Christian should appeal to the Almighty when in fear of the assaults of the Evil One.

Thus much for the symptoms and treatment of this rather extraordinary complaint. The mode of ejecting the Old Gentleman from his temporary possession is something similar to what we have already described. After the patient has been induced to dance pretty frequently, it is to be hoped that the devil is got into a tolerably good humour, which desideratum can only be obtained by making frequent and polite inquiries when he will be pleased to have music, and by promptly procuring everything he may demand, by the mouth of the possessed, whether it be food or wearing apparel. The auspicious moment arriving, the friends of the sufferer inquire of her when *he* will be disposed to quit his present residence and go to his own place. The first time this question is ventured upon, the spirit generally replies that he is not yet satisfied with the entertainment he has received at their hands, and

seizes the opportunity of demanding something more. After a time, however, if things go on well, he fixes a day for taking his leave, usually the 7th after the day on which he makes the announcement. The happy time having arrived, a large party is assembled in some wild spot in the country, and there must be feasting, dancing, and music, as before, but, if possible, carried on with more than usual spirit. The patient joins in with the rest; and the devil, when satisfied, announces his intention to depart. This he signifies through the medium of his victim, who takes off her finery; then bowing her head, she kisses her hands in token of farewell, and starts off, running at a pace which few men could equal. She cannot, however, keep it up for more than from fifty to a hundred yards, when she falls to the ground senseless. At this moment the spirit is supposed to have left her; and lest he should find himself worse off outside than in, and, changing his mind, return to her, five or six active young men are prepared beforehand, and as soon as she starts they follow her, and, coming up with her just as she is falling, place themselves in threatening attitudes round her body, one holding a drawn sword, another firing a charge of powder out of a matchlock, and a third brandishing a lance. This is supposed to intimidate the fiend, and prevent his return, should he be so disposed.

The woman, who but a moment before was outdoing all the party, both in the dance and in running, now lies stretched on the ground helpless and emaciated, as if after a long illness. She faintly calls for water, which

is given her; and when a little restored, she is asked her name, which she answers correctly: and as a conclusive proof of her freedom from the power of the Evil One, she is requested to repeat the formerly so much dreaded words—"B'ism Ab, ou Weld, ou Menfus Kouddos" (In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost). A sheep or a fowl is killed, broiled on the embers, and eaten with bread. The patient's friends partake of this food when the devil goes out of her. The bones and remains of the meat are burned with fire, and the fragments of the bread buried in the ground. These are so left for the devil, that if he should come back to the place he may remain and feed, and not go on and bother the woman. Thus is the cure complete, though it often takes a considerable time to effect it.

To many of my readers it will doubtless appear, and very naturally, that all these symptoms are impostures resorted to by the pretended sufferers as a means of procuring the borrowed finery, and enjoying the gaieties and festivities which are considered as the means of curing their disorder. This sounds very probable; and I cannot deny that such is my own opinion, though there are still some points which have rather puzzled me.—First, as in the Bouda, the extraordinary talent for acting which they display, and then the fact that the imposture has not been discovered and published centuries ago, but that it is still believed by the very people among whom it has so long been and still daily continues to be practised. How is it possible that a woman, who in

her youthful days may have been guilty of such a hoax, should suffer herself to be imposed upon and led into so much trouble and expense by her children afterwards? And yet this is of common occurrence. From this last remark, let it not be supposed that young women are the only sufferers: men and women of all ages are liable, though the young of the fair sex are perhaps the most frequently possessed. Lastly, the most puzzling thing of all is when a person acts sickness to such perfection that Azraël himself is deceived, and, mistaking the feigned malady for a real one, finishes it by seriously taking away the life of the shammer.

The following case will illustrate what I mean. I had a servant named Bairou, a youth of about nineteen, but who, from having been several years in the service of Europeans, had acquired a few of their notions; and among others, had learnt to ridicule the superstitions of his countrymen. He had a sister who had been ill for several months, and no one knew what her complaint was. At his request I went to visit her more than once, but was unable to do anything for her. The fact is, my doctoring is on a very limited scale; and, as even the most eminent physicians agree that the greatest difficulty is to ascertain what is really the matter with a patient, I stood very little chance with Bairou's sister, who complained of nothing, and showed no marked signs of ailing, except in entire prostration of strength, and a rapid falling off of flesh. She gradually got worse, till one day her brother came to me and requested me to lend him my ornaments, and also to beg

some more from my friends at the camp. I asked him whether he was going to be "arkey" to some friend about to marry; but he answered with a melancholy smile that he wanted them for his sister; as, having tried everything else, their friends had proposed to see if she were possessed, and he, though not believing any such nonsense, was willing to allow them to try the experiment, lest, if anything happened to her, they should upbraid him afterwards for having caused her death by his obstinacy and incredulity.

I of course quite approved of his determination, and easily succeeded in obtaining the articles required of me. She was dressed up in the borrowed finery as she lay on the couch; and at a signal the musicians outside commenced playing. At the first notes her eyes began to brighten, and, raising herself up for the first time during many days, she swayed her body to and fro for a few moments, after the manner of one possessed; but, becoming quickly exhausted, she sank back, saying with a faint smile, "It is too late now!" She repeated these words twice: they were the last I ever heard her utter. Three hours after she was a corpse. Was this, too, a sham? Or what may it be called? Possibly some freak of her disordered imagination.

Now, having concluded this diabolical subject, I may venture to deduce from it one or two pieces of advice to my fair readers. First, to such of them as may be of a nervous temperament, I would recommend a glass of something warm before going to bed, lest, having read this, they should dream of the devil. Secondly,

to be cautious about shamming hysterics; for I doubt not that in a very short time my jar of smoke, for which I think of obtaining a patent, by the name of the "Patent Anti-Hystericon Abyssinicum," will be in general use. Thirdly, to remember a truth clearly told in the description of the Tigritiya, namely, that excessive fondness for dress, ornaments, and dancing, are some proofs of being possessed by the devil.

Besides the possessing devils which we have described, the natives of Abyssinia believe in the existence of many other kinds of spirits, more or less malignant in their dispositions, as well as in ghosts, &c. There is a species of evil genius which they call Dabbas, occasionally to be met with in certain parts of the town of Adoua. One of his most favourite haunts is said to be in the street near the brook where Hajji Yohannes, the Armenian blacksmith, lives; another near the house of Ato Wàssan, the Governor; and the third near the old palace on the top of the hill. The form that he assumes is a sort of thick blueish mist, quite different from any other vapour in its appearance, and something horrible to look at. I have asked many persons whether the vapour assumes a human form in its outline, but have never obtained a satisfactory answer: "It does, and it does not, but it is fearful to see," being generally the rather vague reply. Woe betide the man who should either rashly or inadvertently approach too near to the terrible spirit; for so surely as any one passes by it, he feels a cold shudder all over his body, the certain forerunner of death. Some are said to have fallen at once

dead on the spot; and though a few have lived to reach their homes and relate the horrors they have encountered, none has ever recovered from the baneful influence of the Dabbas.

There are persons in the country who are supposed to be able to call up spirits, and obtain from them any information they may require. These men are mostly Defterers (or Scribes), and are regarded with a certain amount of rather dubious respect. The scene of their incantation is generally some ravine, with a stream running through it. As I have only heard the reports of the common people on the subject, I cannot describe accurately what ceremonies are observed, or what form the devil assumes on quitting the water at their summons. My informants, however, assured me that he came as a great chief, with the usual train of shield-bearers behind him, and gunners before him.

Oubi has one of these sorcerers, who procures for him any information he may require. This man, who is reputed to be very learned, is of quiet retiring manners and amiable disposition. For some time past he has been suffering from a cutaneous disease,—not, however, leprosy, but, like that complaint, it has left him nearly white. The common people positively assert that this change of colour was caused by a stroke from the devil, whom he had summoned.

The "Fellàty," or knowing ones (called in the Amhàric "Awàhy," which has the same meaning), are a set of impostors, who pretend that they are prophets; or rather, that by the aid of the saints and divine

inspiration they can discover secrets of any kind. In some parts of Abyssinia their decision, in matters of dispute where no witnesses can be procured, is considered infallible,—so much so, that it not unfrequently occurs that two disputants, who may appear before a judge without either being able to produce testimony to substantiate his cause, are referred to the Fellàty. The prophet is not always in condition to act—certain days or nights, such as the period of the full moon, and other epochs, being his times of consultation. On these occasions he is seated in his house among his friends and servants, filling their wondering ears with adventures (if so they may be called) of his life; such as, how on a certain mountain he had an interview with such a one of the saints, &c. The persons who wish to appeal to him have only to come and stand outside; for it is pretended that he can see them even through the wall; nay more, that he can at once divine their business and the merits of the cause to be tried. Then he will say to those around him, "Two (or more) persons are outside the house: they are come to inquire of me on such and such a matter: let them be called!" So they are admitted, and he at once decides the case, without needing to put any questions to either party. Thus, suppose the dispute to be about some money, which the one accuses the other of having stolen from him: the Fellàty will instantly declare that the man is innocent or guilty: if the latter, he will detail to the greatest nicety the place whence the money was taken, the dress the man wore at the time, and every particular connected with the affair.

Although, as I have before said, the people in some parts of the country have great faith in the revelations of these men, they are nevertheless under the ban of the Church, and are not admitted into the places of worship. Persons who consult them are likewise excommunicated until they shall have confessed their fault and received absolution. Dejatch Oubi had formerly one of them with him—a Galla by birth, named Abou Aizer. This man had been in the service of Oubi's father, Dejatch Hailo Mariam, and for many years had contrived, by good luck, and doubtless some talent, to keep his post of adviser, and to laugh at everybody with great success; but at last he overreached himself, for he counselled the Prince to go to Devra Tabor and fight Ali, telling him that he should come off victorious, and possess the whole of his rival's territories. Oubi went; and, as we have already seen, having lost the day, was put into prison. Abou Aizer was prudent enough to fly for refuge to a convent in Waldabba, as soon as the news of Oubi's liberation reached him.

To account for my description of these impostors being a rather lame one, I must acknowledge that I have written it only from what was told me by others, never having had an opportunity of seeing the Fellàty myself. I have asked several natives whether they placed any faith in the pretensions of these men. Some have replied that there was no doubt in the matter; while a good many others, and I suspect the most sensible part of my informants, told me that in their opinion there was a good deal of trickery in it; and

that, although there were possibly some true Fellàty, yet the decisions of many so calling themselves were only based on an extraordinary acquaintance with the persons, habits, houses, &c., of every one in the neighbourhood; and that by the aid of this knowledge and a good deal of tact they often succeeded in giving a just decision, which, from the apparently astonishing detail of their descriptions, seemed to the vulgar to be surely the words of inspiration. Should, however, their answer be unsatisfactory or their sentence unjust, they fall back on some excuse; such as that the season or hour was not propitious. In most parts of Abyssinia their decision is not considered as legal or binding.

There are two sets of these fellows; the one having for their patron St. George, the other following a saint called Abouna Zeràbrok. This saint's story is rather amusing from its extreme absurdity; and though, perhaps, it should have been related with those of Aragàwy and Gabro Menfus Kouddos, I will tell it here, on the principle of "better late than never."

Abouna Zeràbrok is said to have been a monk of Tima, in the province of Maytcha, a very holy man, and living as a recluse entirely in the wilds and forests, far from the temptations and lures of society. One day, being desirous to travel, twelve wings sprouted from different parts of his body, and by their aid he flew to the extreme edge of the earth (in those days the earth was flat), and found that the world was encircled by two enormous serpents, a male and a female; the name of the former being Biheyamote, and that of the latter

Yohattan. To appease their hunger the birds of the air, of their own accord, flew into their mouths, while an angel kept continually pouring water down their throats to quench their thirst. Our friend Zeràbrok, having ascertained their names and mode of living, was farther prompted by curiosity to count the number of their teeth, probably to ascertain their age. So, going to the male, he said to him, "Biheyamote, I command thee, in the name of the Lord, to open wide thy mouth!" The serpent obeyed, and the saint walked in, first having placed his staff upright between the jaws, lest, on account of his twelve wings, the monster should mistake him for a covey of birds and devour him. He counted his teeth to the number of many millions, and then withdrew. An angel, appearing to him, commanded him to return to his country, and giving up his solitary life instruct his children (disciples) in what he had seen. This he did until the day of his death. The convent called by his name is now resorted to by many sick persons, or by those possessed of the devil, or madmen. The friends of the patients bring with them jars, which they fill with water and place near the church. The priests then read the life of Zeràbrok, and certain other offices, over the water; after which it is supposed that the spirit of the saint descends into it; and, thus sanctified, it is dashed over the heads of the afflicted persons by their relations. This treatment is considered very efficacious in cases of lunacy. After one or two jars have been poured over him a madman usually speaks, declaring how the saint has appeared to him and pro-

mised him his recovery, admonishing him to lead a new life, and to devote his time to good deeds and charity.

This is the effect which the water *should* have. It sometimes, however, happens that sickly subjects die under this rather rough treatment. These, notwithstanding, are better off than those who recover, for they are believed to pass at once into heaven, even though their lives have been sinful.

There is another set of impostors, called "Zacchàri," or the disciples of Abouna Abel. These, however, are confined exclusively to the provinces of Tigré, where they are in great numbers, and have several meeting-places (not to call them monasteries), the principal of which is in Hatzabo, near Axum. It is situated on a hill, near the top of which springs a small stream that in falling forms a sort of cascade. Many sick persons go thither to bathe, having great faith in the reputed healing properties of the water. Hard by is the residence of the chief of the Zacchàri, whom the bathers usually think right to propitiate with small donations, the smallest of which are gladly received.

Once a year, on the anniversary of the patron saint, young people of both sexes collect at this spot, and pass three days in feasting and dancing. Priests, and men who enjoy a reputation for learning or dignity, do not however patronize these assemblies. The influence of the Zacchàri is, indeed, confined almost entirely to the lower classes. A man of any pretension to education would order one of them out of his house, if he came to bother him: a great chief, like Oubi, would pro-

bably have him whipped for his pains. Moreover, like the Fellàty, they are excommunicated, and (unless secretly and disguised) cannot enter a church. In some points they resemble certain sects of Mohammedan derwishes. They are impudent beggars: their principal victims are the wives of the country peasantry. The husband being out at his work, one of them will enter the house, attired in a strange costume, chiefly formed of leopard-skins, growling and roaring like a wild beast, and striking himself with a staff ornamented with rings of brass or silver, which they all carry. He will demand of the poor woman a piece of cloth, or a quantity of corn, or whatever article he may fancy, snarling horribly at her all the while, and threatening that, should she not comply, some fearful domestic calamity, such as her death or that of her husband or child, will be the consequence. Moved by her fears and superstition, the poor woman usually gives him what he requires; and then he promises her all sorts of happiness, the first fruits of which she mostly realizes in the form of a scolding, or perhaps a beating, from her husband on his return.

Like some derwishes, they show off feats of endurance by thrusting their feet into the fire, striking themselves with whips, pretending to cut their shoulders with swords, and various other tricks of jugglery; continuing all the time to growl and roar at intervals, while telling the fortunes of the bystanders, who usually sweeten their prophetic tongues with gifts. They pretend to act thus from being moved by the spirit; the

generality of the people, however, believe them rather to be in league with the devil.

Abouna Abel was a monk, and reputed a very just man; in later life he became a hermit, and died in the odour of sanctity. As is the case with many originators of religious sects, the good example of his life has been forgotten, and the just principles he taught have been perverted to their present corrupt state by his degraded followers.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ANECDOTES ILLUSTRATIVE OF CHARACTER, ETC.

IT is a difficult task for any man to form a just opinion of the character of a nation through whose country he may have passed, or among whom he may have sojourned only for a short space of time. Travellers are far too apt to attribute to an entire population traits which they may have observed in the townspeople, or even in their own immediate followers. Such an estimate is evidently unfair: the servants usually chosen by foreigners, in all parts of the world, are of a stamp peculiar to themselves, and often but poor samples even of the class to which they nominally belong. No one who has made the tour of the Continent will have any difficulty in appreciating the truth of this remark; for surely neither the guides to curiosities, the laquais-de-place, and commissionaires, who speak a few words of English, in Europe, nor the Maltese, Greek, or Arab dragomen of the East, would be considered as fair specimens of servants; nor, indeed, would any one be justified in asserting that the Arabs are a cowardly race of beggars, merely because he may have been persecuted by cries of "bàckshish ya Khawàga!" (a present,

Sir!) by the lads of Egypt, who had immediately turned tail on the approach of a "courbatch" (whip, made of hippopotamus-hide). Wherever travellers, no matter of what nation they be, are in the habit of passing, they spoil the people with whom they come in contact; or rather perhaps it is, that the people who volunteer their services to them are usually of not a very high grade. The newly-arrived tourist, from ignorance of the language, localities, and prices of the country, naturally applies to his interpreter to ascertain where he may best purchase anything that he may need; the servant as naturally directs him to the shops of those tradesmen from whom he anticipates the highest percentage—thus our friend gets among a bad set of tradesmen. And so on, were I to give myself the pains—which I certainly should do if I thought thereby to interest my readers—I could portray, after the manner of Hogarth, a "Traveller's Progress;" showing how, step by step, he advances, until he arrives at scene the last,—a totally false estimate of the nation's character.

What I have said of *most* travellers is, perhaps, in a certain measure, applicable to *all*, myself included; though, of course, the longer a person remains in a country and the more he mixes with the natives and assimilates himself to them, which is of still greater importance, the less likely is he to form a false opinion of their dispositions.

There are errors, too, into which the readers of travels may fall as well as the writer: such as attributing to character what may belong only to custom;

as, for instance, natural cruelty to a people on account of certain of their habits in war being cruel; immorality to those who allow a plurality of wives; or who, like our Abyssinian friends, seldom marry at all, preferring a sort of concubinage; and thievishness to a Bedouin, because he waylays a caravan. But this is nearly invariably wrong.

An Abyssinian has much kindly feeling, though in fight he considers his victory incomplete unless he horribly mutilates his fallen foe; and from what I have read of the American Indians I should think the same might be said of them, notwithstanding their *penchant* for scalps and tortures. The Abyssinian is attached and faithful to his rather slightly-married wife, and who is more trustworthy than the desert Arab?

We are too apt also to compare the manners of other nations with our own, and to judge of the people accordingly. This again leads to a mistaken opinion. We pick out some striking custom, and from it deduce the national character, forgetting that, were they to form an estimate of ours on the same principle, they would possibly remark something about us which would lead them to entertain precisely the same opinion of us as we had formed of them.

At first sight we should doubtless call many of the Eastern nations uncleanly: yet I am sure that any one, even a European, who has got accustomed to Oriental life, will allow that in many of our habits we are infinitely less clean.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged," is a command

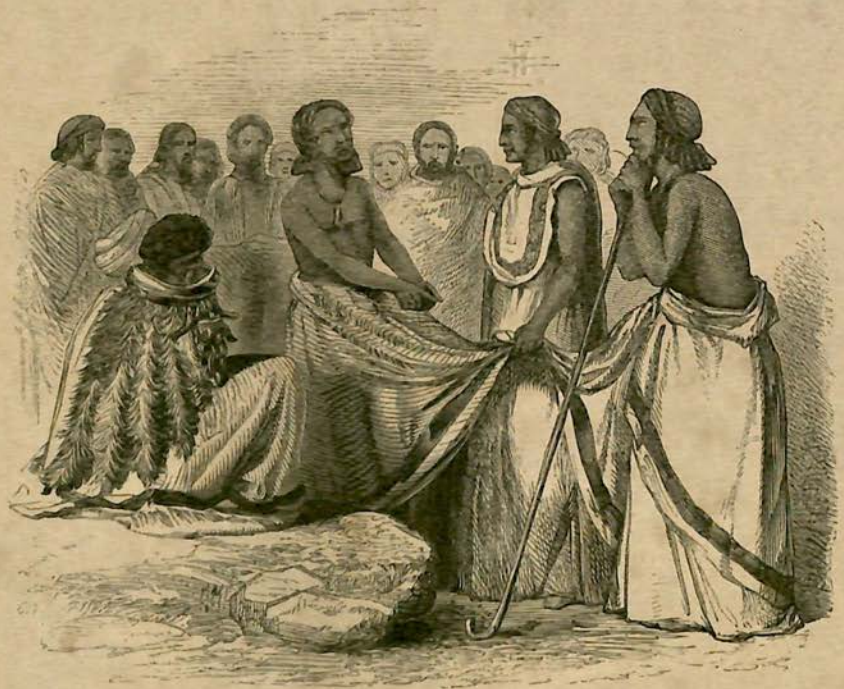
which ought to be more carefully attended to than it is. I don't believe that there exists a nation, however high in the scale of civilization, that can pick a hole in the character of the lowest, without being in danger of finding one nearly, if not quite, as big in its own. The vices of the savage are, like his person, very much exposed to view. Our own nakedness is not less unseemly than his, but is carefully concealed under that convenient cloak which we call "civilization," but which I fear he, in his ignorance, poor fellow, might, on some occasions, be led to look upon as hypocrisy.

Perhaps in what I have said I have allowed myself to enter too generally into the subject of national character, and should rather have confined my remarks to that of the Abyssinians in particular. It may have led my readers to fancy that in speaking of *savages* I was alluding to this people; but such was far from my intention. The Abyssinians, though now barely removed from the lowest degree of barbarism, can still scarcely be considered in this class. They were formerly a great nation, and, judging from the more ancient accounts of them, in a pretty advanced state of civilization. From this, however, time and political divisions have reduced them to what they now are. Like many other similarly fallen races they are in some points even worse than the primitive savage, retaining most of the vices of the civilized world, with few of its advantages, except some outward forms of politeness.

As regards religious matters, I have already endeavoured to show that theirs is a religion of faith, or

rather superstition, more than of works. Among themselves they are of an easily excited temper; but unless the subject of quarrel be grievous, peace, and with it good fellowship, is quickly restored. This is the case in personal matters. Where, however, interest is concerned they are not so easily satisfied, for they enter into law proceedings (after their fashion), and the consequent expenses, with the greatest readiness, and frequently for the most absurd causes.

Their legal disputes are conducted in a rather different manner from our own. They have a sort of self-taught counsellor, who is called a "magwatch," but who is neither educated for his profession nor called to the bar, being indeed only an ordinary man, with an extraordinary gift of the gab. These men are sometimes employed by the disputants in serious cases, but not invariably, as almost every one in the country is more or less gifted. If two persons have a dispute on any subject, however trifling, one of them getting heated proposes to refer it to the chief, or "dainya," as he is termed. A servant of his is sent for, whose business is to conduct the disputants before his master. He first ties the corners of their garments together in a knot, holding which in his hand, he adjures them by the back of Oubi, and by that of the chief, that neither of them should presume to speak while on their way. As this species of adjuration will be frequently mentioned during the following narrative, it may be as well to state here that the person who disobeys an order so given is liable to a fine, nominally of nine dollars, which



"MOGWET," OR PLEADING.

is the perquisite of the chief, who, however, usually contents himself with exacting a part of it only. Some disputants nevertheless agree beforehand that a mule or cow shall be the forfeit.

Arrived at the chief's, the litigants are placed before him, with a servant between them, to prevent any personal disputes or blows, should they be inclined to give vent to their excited feelings. They then have permission to open the cause. And first the accuser begins by placing his opponent under restrictions, lest he should disturb his speech, which he does by adjuring him, as before, that he shall neither speak, nor advance his foot, nor move his hand in the way of gesture, until he shall have his permission to do so. It must be a very disagreeable thing, in an English court of law, to be obliged to hear the examination of the witnesses for the opposing party, without being able to contradict or answer any statement which you know to be false, or easy of explanation. How much more so must it be for a hot-tempered Abyssinian, just warm from a dispute, to stand by, unable even to gesticulate, while his opponent is savagely and perhaps unjustly attacking his honour, or, what is yet dearer to him, his interest! Still he dare not break through his restraint, unless he would pay the "Sabbar," or patience fine, before mentioned. All that he is allowed to do is to grunt "Em! em!" which he continues to do, in every tone and expression of voice, so long as his adversary keeps him under restriction. At last his turn comes, and, his tongue being liberated, he gives vent to his pent-up feelings in a pro-

portionally excited answer; his accuser being in turn silenced, if he chooses. Witnesses are called; documents, if there be any, are referred to; and judgment is passed.

But we have forgotten one part of the business, which is perhaps the most absurd of any, and at the same time the most lucrative to the chief. Bets, or rather forfeits, are made during the trial of the cause. For instance, if the subject of dispute be the ownership of a piece of land (by no means an uncommon cause of litigation in a country where title-deeds are traditionary), one party will say, "This land was held by my father, my grandfather, great-grandfather, &c., since the days of such and such a king! On it, a mule!" Or sometimes even ten mules, each of which is reckoned at ten dollars. If the other accepts the challenge, the loser pays over the sum to the chief. Sometimes, however, when one of the parties is poorer than the other who offers the bet, he will say, "I cannot afford so much as ten mules: I make it a cow." This amendment is almost always agreed upon. Horses, guns, or any other article of value may be substituted; but the absurd part of the business is, that these wagers frequently exceed in value the article about which the dispute originated. I myself was once present when ten mules, equivalent to 20*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.* of our money, which of course is a large sum in Abyssinia, were lost in a dispute between two farmers, as to which had to pay in tribute a small quantity of corn, of the value of a shilling or two. The loser of any of these wagers or forfeits is required to

produce a surety for their payment; and should he be unable to do so, he is imprisoned, or rather chained by the arm to some servant of the chief.

From the story of Oubi's family may be deduced one of the worst points in the Abyssinian character, or, to speak more correctly, in the constitution of their society: I mean the want of affection among relations, even though they be children of one father. As I have before remarked, this strange absence of what would appear to be a natural feeling is attributable not so much to any coldness of heart innate in the people, as to the custom of a man's having a variety of wives. Hence arise jealousy and dislike among the different families. These animosities, however, do not exist among the offspring of the same mother and father, any more than in other nations; but as the proportion of *half* brethren is much greater than that of *own* brethren, fraternal affection is rather a rare thing. Many instances might be related to confirm this besides that of Oubi's family. Some of them may not be out of place or uninteresting.

Fitowrari Garr' Amlac had three sons — Desta, Wàssan, and Gosho. Desta and Gosho were children of his *ostensible* * wife, while Wàssan was son of a concubine. More or less jealousy had grown up among them from children, till at length, after their father's death, Wàssan, ingratiating himself with Oubi (then

* By this expression I mean that—perhaps because she was the daughter of some great man—she was considered by him as his wife, though in all probability married only in the slight manner I have alluded to.

lately established in the government of Tigrè), induced him to deprive Desta of the province of Gandafta, which had descended to him from his father, and to give it to himself. The elder brother, unable to resist the Prince's authority, waited patiently till the time should arrive when he might recover his lost possessions; judging doubtless that in the disturbed state of the country he would not have to wait long for an opportunity. Nor was he mistaken. As soon as Oubi left the country on the expedition against Ras Ali, which terminated in his defeat at Devra Tabor, and Balgadda Araia appeared on the stage as pretender to the throne, Desta joined the latter with all his people, and by him was reinstated in the province he had lost, while Wàssan, compelled to seek safety in flight, took sanctuary at Axum.

But things did not long remain in that state. The reader will remember that Oubi's imprisonment, after the battle at Devra Tabor, was but of short duration, and that at the intercession of the patriarch he was allowed to return to his country and reassume his former power. When he appeared on the Taccazy, after his recovery of Simyen, *en route* for Tigrè, the Balgadda retreated before him to Enderta, taking the way of Antichau,* while Oubi passed by Temben and Selloa. They approached each other at Enderta, and, had the

* This province then belonged to our countryman Coffin, but subsequently to a Mr. Schimper, a German. When Balgadda Araia passed it on this occasion Coffin gave him forty muskets, which gift was the cause of Oubi's anger towards him and of his country being given to the German.

Balgadda attacked Oubi at once, he would in all probability have gained the day, and at the same time the kingdom, for the troops from Simyen were neither numerous nor well armed, many of them carrying only staves and clubs. But superstition prevented him. He himself, it is true, was most anxious to attack the enemy at once, but his friends dissuaded him, telling him that Oubi had always been successful in that neighbourhood, that that part of the country was marked by the hand of Providence itself as the spot where he was to be always victorious, and that it would be madness to fight him there. So they fell back upon Wojerat, whither a part of Oubi's force pursued them. Balgadda turned on these and defeated them with great loss. Still, however, he dared not follow up his advantage by an attack on Oubi himself, but retired to his stronghold in the mountains.

To return to our story: As soon as Wàssan saw that his protector had gained the upper hand he came out from his sanctuary at Axum and encamped for a while in the valley near the source of the brook Assam, above Àdoua. After having collected a considerable body of troops he marched on Gandafta, anticipating that his brother, overawed by his display of force, would retire, and leave him to take possession quietly. But Desta's character was one that required more than a mere show to intimidate it, and not having forces equal to Wàssan's he remained in his place at Assaye, a district of his province. Wàssan had not courage to attack him, but encamped a short distance off.

Things being in this state, many persons from among their mutual acquaintances and the priests of the neighbourhood interfered between them, pointing out how disgraceful a thing it was that brothers should be openly at war with each other, and urging them to come to some arrangement, that there might be peace between them. After much entreaty their point was gained, and moreover, the two mutually agreed that, to whichever of the rival princes fortune should give the throne, the brother who was in favour should protect the other; that, should Oubi gain the day, Wàssan should intercede for Desta, and *vice versâ* if the Balgadda should succeed.

After this agreement the rival camps were pitched near to one another, and the brothers went to and from each other's tents in apparently the greatest friendship. Desta, confiding in the other's good faith, even allowed a great part of his soldiers to return to their homes. But the event showed how little Wàssan deserved such generous confidence; for, no sooner did he perceive that his brother's camp was unprotected, and that he was enjoying himself, feasting and merrymaking in the greatest security, than he collected his men and announced to them that the peace he had made was not from his heart, but was merely a stratagem to throw Desta off his guard. It is but justice to them to relate that from many of his own people arose a murmur of dissatisfaction at this disgraceful treachery. Desta's camp was surrounded, and he taken from the table where he was supping. He was bound, and left in charge of the chief of Zatta, a neighbouring province, who kept him close prisoner on

his mountain till the arrival of Oubi. On the return of this Prince, Wàssan went to meet him, and told him what he had done. Oubi congratulated him on his success, and, sending for Desta, ordered that his right hand should be cut off, and that he should be kept in confinement for the remainder of his life in the mountain fort of Tazzan, in Simyen.

Even under the execution of this cruel sentence, Desta's firmness never deserted him. He told the executioner to be sure that his knife was well sharpened; and then, spreading his fingers, in order that the division of the tendons at the wrist might be more easily made, submitted to the amputation, without allowing his enemies to see, even by the expression of his face, that he suffered any pain. When the hand was severed, he took it up in his left with the utmost coolness, and saying, "See! I have still a hand with which I can cast a lance!" threw it at the chief who presided, and then, with as little hesitation as if about to wash, put the bleeding stump into a vessel of boiling butter, which had been provided for stopping the hemorrhage.

Oubi was cruel enough to propose that Desta's son, a child of nine or ten years old, should suffer a like punishment; but he was overruled by the chiefs, who told him that he had nothing to fear from the lad when he grew up, as, he being only heir to a minor chieftainship, his influence, even if he possessed any, would be at best but local, and not likely to endanger the tranquillity of the throne of Tigrè. So his hand was spared; but he was sent to Tazzan with his father,

where they have been confined ever since, and where they will probably continue as long as the government of Tigrè remains with the Simyen family.

Having thus given the story of Wàssan's treachery to his brother, it is but fair that I should relate an instance of his fidelity to his patron Oubi, and the consequent cruel treatment he suffered at the hands of Dejatch Welda Yessous, that Prince's uncle.

According to some persons, the origin of the quarrel between Welda Yessous and Wàssan was owing to the latter having been preferred to the former by Wazro Simmerate, who afterwards became Wàssan's wife; but I cannot help agreeing with the majority of those with whom I have conversed on the subject, that romantic jealousy was far less likely to have been the true cause of Welda Yessous's hate, than that which was asserted as such by Wàssan, and believed by Oubi, namely, that he had refused to become party to a plot, framed by Welda Yessous, for murdering his nephew and taking for himself the government of Tigrè.

It happened that, when Oubi's camp was near Selloa, Wàssan, one day visiting Welda Yessous, was informed by him of his wicked design, and invited to join in it. From his influence with the Prince, with whom he was a great favourite, he had free access to his presence; and therefore his connivance with the conspirators would have been of the utmost importance to them, and the means he would have had of facilitating their attempt greater perhaps than any other man could command. On his refusing, the Dejasmatch proposed to him that,

if he had any qualms of conscience on the subject, his hand was not necessary to the deed, nor, in fact, need he take any actual part in the proceedings at the camp, but that his share should be to raise the people of Tigrè, among whom he had considerable influence, not only as son of one of their chieftains, but also from having, in conjunction with his brother, taken great part in the defence of the country against Oubi, when that Prince first appeared as a conqueror and usurper.

But Wàssan's fidelity was equally proof against the temptations offered to him of becoming second man in the kingdom, as against the threats held out in case of his noncompliance. He continued firm to his trust, protesting that Oubi was his greatest friend and benefactor, and that therefore he felt that, so far from conspiring against him, he ought not to hesitate even to lay down his life in his service.

Welda Yessous had not calculated on his proposals being received in this manner, and began to consider in what way to dispose of Wàssan, so as to ensure his not revealing the plot. He pretended that he had been only tempting him, and burst out laughing, exclaiming, "Good! So you thought I was serious, and really meditated evil towards my nephew; while, on the contrary, I am he who, of all others, most seeks his welfare, and only wished to try your fidelity, and see if, by your attachment to him, you deserved the high place that you occupy in his esteem and confidence." At the same time, affecting the greatest cordiality and friendship, he invited him to play with him at "goux."

Wàssan knew his man too well to be taken in by these false representations, and, expecting some treachery, would willingly have backed out of the proposed game, but dared not, fearing lest by so doing he might provoke the chief. He therefore preferred running the risk of the danger he suspected, rather than afford Welda Yessous a pretext for openly picking a quarrel. Circumstances occurred at their starting which by no means tended to lessen his suspicions that foul play was designed. The Dejasmatch was attended by eight slaves, all mounted. Wàssan had brought with him ten followers, who, on seeing their master set out, offered to accompany him. But Welda Yessous prevented this, exclaiming, "What needs so many folk? We are going to play, and not to battle!"—at the same time desiring them to repose, and, with the greatest politeness, ordering them to be furnished with plenty of food and drink wherewith to make themselves happy.

Wàssan did not at all approve of these measures; but, not having any excuse why he should take his people along with him, was obliged to yield the point, and accordingly proceeded, accompanied only by his "gasha-zagry," or shield-bearer. On arriving at a plain, some distance from the camp, but convenient for the manœuvring of horses, they commenced the game. All went on well at the beginning. Welda Yessous threw his staff at Wàssan, who received it on his shield, and returned the compliment; and so a few passes were made on either side with all appearance of peace and amusement. But this sort of game was not the

one which the Dejasmatch had come for; so it ended speedily; for, on his making a signal to his slaves, two of them seized the shield-bearer from behind, and bound him; while the others, with their master, pursued Wàssan, and, striking him with their staves, instead of throwing them, as is done in the game, knocked him off his horse, and belaboured him till he was senseless. Welda Yessous then with his own hand emasculated him, thinking probably that he was dead. After which he ordered his slaves to cast the body into a hole, formed by a small cascade, in a neighbouring brook. This done, they returned homewards, carrying with them the shield and clothes of their victim, wrapped up in a bundle, so that they might not be recognised. They informed his servants that, while on the road, he had received a peremptory message from the King, requiring his immediate attendance, and that he had set out for the camp by another road. Welda Yessous, imagining Wàssan to be dead, was rejoiced at having thus satisfied his revenge, and succeeded in getting rid of him; he, in consequence, ordered a good supper, got excessively drunk, and fell asleep on the strength of it. But he had forgotten that there had been a witness to the whole affair: in his excitement and joy at the death of the master, he had never inquired after the shield-bearer. Unluckily for the murderer, this man had contrived to escape while the slaves were busy with his master, and, making the best of his way to the camp, related to some of Oubi's attendants the particulars of the tragedy which had just taken place. These were imme-

diately reported to the Prince, who ordered that instant search should be made for the body, and that it should be brought to his tent as soon as found. Guided by the shield-bearer, a party proceeded to the spot where Wàssan was knocked from his horse, and, thence following the traces of blood to the brook where his assailants had left him, they found the exact place where he had been thrown in, and the footsteps of those who had dragged him, and understood immediately that he had been left there for dead; but still the body was nowhere to be found. After some search, other traces of blood were discovered on the opposite bank, which, being followed up, led them, not, as they anticipated, to the place whither he had been dragged and concealed, but to the chief himself, whom they found alive, though sorely wounded and faint from loss of blood. He was crawling away on all-fours, and stark naked. It appeared from his story that the water falling over him had brought him to his senses. He then drank; and, after that, managed to stanch, as well as he might, the blood which flowed copiously from his wounds. Then, fearing lest some of his intended murderers might return and finish their deed more completely, he dragged himself away, in the hope of being able to reach some hut or village. His servants procured a stretcher, and, having covered him with a garment, carried him to Oubi, to whom he related the cause of his ill-treatment, asserting it to have been his refusal to join in the conspiracy against him. Meanwhile we have left Welda Yessous eating, drinking, and sleeping away, in happy

ignorance of all these events. In the morning, however, he was awakened early by a confidential servant, who came to him bearing the dreadful news that Wàssan was alive, and in the camp of Oubi. Welda Yessous was startled by this sudden and unexpected communication; but, in order not to be taken unawares, he desired his men to be ready, and, putting on his belt and sword, remained prepared either to fly, or to fight if brought to bay. But in his nephew he had a man who was more than even *his* match in cunning and diplomacy.

Oubi knew well the danger of openly attacking so determined a warrior and so powerful a chieftain as his uncle, and accordingly allowed no hostile preparations or demonstrations of any kind to be made about his camp. His plan for taking him was, in fact, similar to that which Welda Yessous himself had used towards Wàssan. Oubi sent a messenger to him, politely requesting his attendance, as if to a feast. Welda Yessous, judging the meaning of this, endeavoured to excuse himself on account of sickness; but messenger succeeding messenger, he determined to go, and accordingly set out, accompanied by a large body of his soldiery. Their arrival being reported to the Prince, he inquired what was the meaning of the troops? Welda Yessous answered that they had come to remind him of their services by going through the "foukera," or war-boast. Oubi thanked him, but at the same time dispensed with this ceremony, saying that on the present occasion great men only were admitted, but no servants or common soldiery.

For some time Welda Yessous refused to enter alone, till at length he was persuaded to do so by some of his friends among the principal of Oubi's chiefs. Whether they guaranteed his safety I know not, but possibly so, as this has been more than once done on similar occasions. However it may have been, he went in, and was courteously received by his nephew, who desired him to be seated. He complied, placing himself on the floor, near Oubi's couch. Mead was served, and all seemed to be going on well. Oubi, knowing his uncle's character, and fearing lest, if rendered desperate, he might offer him violence, was prepared in every way against such an occurrence. His shield hung on a peg near him, and a sword lay on his couch convenient to his hand. Besides all these precautions, he had taken the still greater one of determining not in any way to enter personally into the question about to be considered; so he continued to speak politely to his uncle on everyday occurrences, until an officer opposite, standing up, said "Dejatch Welda Yessous, I have a matter with you, to be tried before the King." Welda Yessous answered that he was at all times ready to be tried, but that he wished to know what was the matter of which he was accused. The courtier replied that, according to custom, he must first find bail for his appearance to be tried when called upon. Welda Yessous applied to those present to become security, but all, knowing what were the wishes of their master, declined. The Dejasmatch called on each one of his friends by name, reproaching them for their backwardness to assist him;

but some were silent, and some flatly refused him. The laws of Abyssinia require that, if a man summoned for trial should be unable to find bail, he shall be bound. So Welda Yessous was completely entrapped, and was seized and bound before he was well aware of what was about to be done, or had recovered from the surprise which he felt at this roundabout way of proceeding. He struggled as well as he could, passionately insulting his captors, and upbraiding them that their conduct was more like that of women than of warriors; that had he been free, and on the field, they could not all together have done by fair fight what they had thus treacherously achieved. He was kept imprisoned for three or four months, Oubi being undecided in what manner to treat him. When, however, he camped at Mai Ainy, feeling that his prisoner was a burden to him, and fearing to leave him, lest escaping he should occasion much trouble by exciting the people to revolt, he called together his chief men, and took counsel with them as to what they should do with him. Belladta Darraso gave the most cruel advice of any, urging that to cut off his hand or foot was not sufficient to prevent his fighting against them; that to kill him outright would, it was true, make an end of him, but that such punishment would be too lenient: and besides, that they who condemned him to death would doubtless be rendered accountable for the long list of unrepented sins which might be written against him; "So," said he, "I advise that his life be spared, but that it be rendered one of wretchedness and misery."

Accordingly he suggested that his eyes should be put out. Oubi, willing to spare himself the opprobrium of such an act, handed his uncle over entirely to Belladta Darraso and Shelika Billé, empowering them to act towards him as they should consider fit and proper. So they took him, and, having bound him hand and foot, threw him backwards on the ground, and fastened his hands and feet to posts driven into the floor. One of the legs of the "arat" or couch on which his judges were seated was placed on his chest, and the executioner proceeded in his presence to heat the blade of the knife with which he was about to operate. These horrible preparations were the last sights he was ever doomed to see; as soon as the blade was red-hot the executioner passed the edge round each eyeball.

Oubi afterwards granted him a small territory for his maintenance in food and clothing. His temper does not seem to be much humbled nor his disposition much improved by the loss of his vision. Once, lately, he killed an old and very faithful servant on the following slight provocation. The poor man was waiting on him, and serving him some broiled meat; the chief complained that it was not sufficiently cooked, and expressed his astonishment that such should be the case, seeing that he had made a similar complaint on the preceding day. The servant replied that it really was done, but that, being juicy, his taste deceived him, and his want of sight prevented his detecting the error. "So you laugh at me, as well as deceive me, because I am blind!" shouted Welda Yessous: and, at the same

time striking upwards with the knife with which he was eating, he stabbed the poor man in the stomach, inflicting so severe a wound that he died in a few hours.

His appetite also is wonderful, amounting to a disease, to which, it appears, most of the elder branches of the family are subject. I should be sorry to repeat the stories I have heard of *whole lambs* eaten by Welda Yessous and Lidge Astrat, as appetizers for the dinner of raw beef which was to follow, for I fear I should be considered as dealing in marvels even beyond the established right of a traveller.

I know many other instances of cruelty which would show that this vice does not belong only to great tyrants, but may be found to be exercised equally by men of the lowest degree. One, in particular, might be taken as an example—though, of course, an unusually severe one—of the treatment to which the peasantry of Tigrè are often subjected from the lawless troops of Amhàra soldiery which are constantly billeted among them. It happened near Hamlo, and was related to me by the sufferer himself.

Two soldiers had been quartered at his house for a considerable time, eating and drinking at his expense, and wasting his substance in every possible way. One day, among other things, they demanded of him a large quantity of ghee (melted butter). He furnished them with as much as he could, and, on their requiring more, assured them that what he had already supplied was all that he had it in his power to give them. Doubting his word, they commenced a search

through the premises, and at last found a small jar, carefully closed and stowed away in a snug corner. On this they accused him of lying, and attempting to starve them; but he declared that the butter was not his own, having been left in his care by such a one, and offering to produce witnesses to the fact; adding that, as the concealed butter was so small in quantity compared with what they had received from him, they might be sure that, had it been his, it would not have been worth his while to keep it back and at the same time give up so much. But they would listen to none of his excuses; they knocked him down, and, having beaten him till he was senseless, stripped him, and then, taking the pestle of his own "foundouk," tied him to it, and put him to roast before a large fire, basting him with the disputed butter. However, whether intentionally or from idleness, they forgot to turn their roast, and in consequence the man was terribly burnt on one side, while the other remained uninjured. When I saw the poor fellow he had nearly recovered, though, judging from the fearful scar which he showed me all down his right side, his cure must have been nearly miraculous. He had just returned from the camp, whither he had been to lay his grievances before Oubi.

I must say for this Prince that he seldom refuses justice to the oppressed among his subjects; and one might almost term him a just ruler, were it not for sundry little mistakes he has made where his own interest was concerned. On this occasion he found means both for making amends to the peasant and

punishing the soldiers, for he made over to him the whole of their property as a compensation, while, to satisfy the demands of justice, he took each of their right hands. The poor man's compensation consisted of two horses, two mules, some cows and sheep, the soldiers' arms, and a little ready money besides.

But of all the many species of barbarity that I have ever heard of, either in Abyssinia or elsewhere, none I think can surpass in cold-bloodedness the following cases of treacherous murder which occurred in an expedition against the Barea, north of Addy Abo.

Shortly after his return to Tigrè, Oubi, being seated one day in his tent, heard some one outside calling aloud to him for his protection, or rather for justice. On ordering the supplicant to be admitted, an old woman was conducted before him. The poor creature, as soon as she found herself in his presence, cast herself on the ground at his feet, and weeping, demanded at his hands the blood of her only son, who had been killed in the Barea country—not, she said, by the enemy, for then he would have fallen in his duty, but murdered by his own comrade (a soldier whose name she mentioned), who had slain him in order thus to obtain from an unsuspecting friend *the trophies* which he had not the prowess to gain in battle from the foe—trophies which he presented before his chiefs as proofs of his valour!

Of course she was required to substantiate this serious charge; and accordingly the case was tried and witnesses were brought, being some of the soldiers who had informed her of the fact. The guilt of the accused

party was clearly proved before the Dejasmatch, who then, addressing the old woman, said to her, "My good mother, it is true that your son has been most cruelly and treacherously murdered, and that you have a right to demand blood for blood of him that slew him; but you are old and poor, and now since the death of your child have no one to support you. Of what benefit will this man's blood be to you? Let him rather ransom his life with a sum of money (I believe 150 dollars was named), which will be riches for you, and will in a measure serve to compensate you for the loss you have sustained."

Thus spoke Oubi, only to try the woman, for he would probably not have spared the man, even had she consented; but he wished to see whether her appeal to him was prompted by true regret for her son, or by the hope of gaining by his death. If he anticipated the latter, the old woman's answer disappointed him. "Never shall it be said," she exclaimed with indignation, "that my only son fed me while he lived, and that I ate his blood after his death."

"I applaud your determination," answered Oubi, "and consent to the murderer's death. But you have no relations here: will you kill him yourself?" "If I cannot kill him myself, God will find some one to revenge me," was the determined old woman's reply.

To explain this, be it known that the custom and law of Abyssinia is, that a murderer when convicted is given up to the relations of his victim, of whom the nearest of kin puts him to death with the same kind

of weapon as that with which he had slain their relative.

After endeavouring ineffectually to shake her purpose by increasing the amount of ransom offered, Oubi consented that she should send to a neighbouring village where she had some distant relatives. Accordingly in a day or two a countryman arrived to take the office of executioner. He was a very clumsy clown; and on the prisoner being laid before him, trussed up in a heap, instead of killing him quietly and delicately, he began to stamp and strut about his Doumfater, or boast, dancing and parading, as if about to do battle with an enemy superior in force, and screaming forth his valour in the most extravagant terms; he killed the soldier, but not until he had inflicted seven lance-wounds in his back, body, and throat. The sight was most disgusting, and all present hooted the lout, though none pitied the sufferer on account of the horrible nature of the crime which he expiated. As for the old woman, Oubi behaved most generously towards her, making over to her the whole of the soldier's property as well as the sum he had offered to ransom him.

Another murder, similar to this, was attempted in the same expedition; but the perpetrator of it met with his punishment on the spot. Two men were out in the forest together—the one a soldier, the other his servant, a lad of about 19, who carried his shield. The Devil appeared to the former in the shape of Vanity, and by working up in his mind visions of glory, which he had never been able to realize in battle, tempted him to

murder his fellow. He yielded, and struck him from behind with his lance. The wound was not mortal; nor indeed does it appear from the sequel to have been of much importance. The servant, finding himself wounded, guessed the horrible intention of his master, and began to implore him. "My master," said the poor fellow, "I have served you with all fidelity from a boy up to the present time, now seven years; during all which period I have never received nor asked of you any wages, but only the morsel I eat and the rags I wear; and will you now kill me?"

"My good lad," coolly replied the miscreant, "what you state is perfectly true: your services have been exemplary, but as yet are incomplete. To have served me faithfully for seven years is considerable credit to you; but it will be still more honourable to your memory that by your death you should be the means of procuring for me much renown, and perhaps (who knows?) seven shoumat (villages to govern)." Thus saying he struck the boy on the head with his club, and stunned him; and then, to make matters certain, stabbed him through the neck with his lance. After this the good man, imagining that his work was complete, proceeded with the utmost deliberation and in the most scientific manner to possess himself of the coveted trophy; which operation having been successfully performed, he returned to the camp by a circuitous route. There he related how he had been attacked, when in a distant part of the forest, by fearful odds; how his poor and faithful follower had been slain, fighting in the most gallant

manner; while he himself, after killing one of the enemy, succeeded in putting the remainder to flight; at the same time showing, as proofs of the reality of his story, marks on his sword and shield, which, like our equally valorous friend Sir John Falstaff, he had himself hacked with his knife; or rather, the sword with the lance, and the shield with the sword.

But ".murder will out;" and unfortunately for him some of his hearers, either from curiosity or discrediting his tale, proposed to return to the scene of action, and asked him to guide them thither. He refused flatly, saying that the spot was a long way off; that he was fatigued; and besides, that the enemy, who had fled, would no doubt carry the news of their comrade's death to their fellows, and return in force to recover the body, and if possible to avenge his death.

By such arguments as these he succeeded in dissuading the more timorous of the party from carrying out their proposal; but others, either less credulous or more courageous than the rest, determined privately to retrace his steps and discover the truth of the matter. Among them were some friends of the murdered lad. Accordingly, leaving the camp on some pretext, they set out in the direction by which he had returned, and after wandering about in the forest for a considerable time—now losing the track, now regaining it—were about to return to their homes in despair, when a cry of surprise from one of the party (which had separated in seeking the trail) called the attention of the rest to the object before him. Their horror and astonishment can

be more easily understood than described when they beheld, at a short distance, the unfortunate lad dragging his mutilated body in the direction of the camp, and now, on beholding them, imploring, in a scarcely audible voice, their assistance and a draught of water. His thirst being in a measure satiated, they proceeded to carry him homewards, and managed, moreover, to give private notice to Oubi of what had occurred.

Oubi, on hearing the story, and seeing the poor fellow's condition, directed that he should be carefully attended to, and gave the strictest orders to all acquainted with the affair that it should be kept a profound secret. The boy, notwithstanding the number and magnitude of his wounds, lived; and a short time after the occurrence, the soldiers being about to go through their boast and tell their deeds ("count their coups," as it would be called in the North American phraseology), Oubi concealed the patient under some drapery behind his couch, in the very place where were the ornaments and other gifts intended for those who had distinguished themselves.

At length came the turn of our Abyssinian Falstaff. He fully declared himself by name and descent, enumerated his services, talked of his valour, and ended by casting at the Prince's feet the trophy he had torn from his victim. Oubi, turning half round, put forth his hand, as if to reach some suitable gift for so brave a warrior—probably nothing less than a silver bitoa, or bracelet.

Our hero, filled with joy and pride, sank on his knees

before his master to receive the expected mark of his favour. "Never fear: *you my brother*," * said Oubi, with his peculiar sardonic smile. "Never fear: I love to reward my brave followers according to their merits;" and drawing back the curtain presented to his expectant gaze the emaciated form of his servant.

The soldier made a sort of movement, as if to rise from his kneeling posture, but it would appear that his legs failed him from terror, for he staggered, and would have fallen back, had not the servants of Oubi, at a signal from their master, saved him the trouble by throwing him on his back and binding him hand and foot. Oubi meanwhile had never ceased to smile, and to regard the culprit with the most amiably complacent expression of features.

When the man was bound he thus addressed him:—"My brave fellow, what greater reward can I offer you for your gallantry than to restore alive to you that dear faithful lad whom you treated with so much affection, in whose defence you fought so valiantly, and whom you mourned as dead!" Then turning to the servant, he said —"My poor lad, go and embrace your kind master!" The boy crawled up to the spot where the prisoner lay bound, and picked up his lance which lay beside him. Not having strength to strike with it he took it in both hands, near the head, and, placing the point on his master's stomach, endeavoured, by leaning all his weight on it, to force the spear into him—not at once,

* These words, when used by Oubi to a common soldier, are generally forerunners of anything but agreeable consequences.

as a lance-stroke, but working it in by slow degrees, like an awl, till he succeeded, after considerable labour, in making a wound of some depth, and then fell fainting over his victim from sheer exhaustion. No description of the contortions of the sufferer, nor of his yells till he was gagged, need be added to this already too horrible story. By Oubi's order the senseless executioner was removed, and a lance thrust downwards obliquely through the prisoner's throat ended his sufferings.

Another Abyssinian killed in a similar manner, and for similar purposes, one of the Arab allies, followers of Nimmer, the Jâly chief. His excuse was, that the similarity of costume and weapons of this people and the hostile Bàza had led to the mistake; but the Arabs claimed his blood, and, the crime being proved against him, Oubi gave him over to their tender mercies. His punishment was most summary. Before they had left the presence of the Prince, one of the relations of the deceased drawing his heavy two-edged broad-sword cut the culprit through with one blow; and turning to Oubi, said, in Arabic, "May God lengthen your life, oh my master!"—just as he would have done had he received a present from his hands; and then, picking up a wisp of grass from the floor, walked away, wiping his blade with as much *sang froid* as if nothing had occurred.

Oubi is said to have expressed much admiration at the manly off-hand way in which this was executed, as well as at the wonderful display of swordsmanship;—wonderful indeed compared with that of his people,

who, partly from the shape of their sword-hilts, and partly from the quality of their blades, can scarcely ever inflict a serious wound.

I know from very good authority that the facts of the Arab being murdered and the subsequent execution of the criminal are true, though I was not present when it occurred. It was related to me that the man was cut completely through the waist; but though I do not dispute the fact, I do not wish any of my readers, who think such a feat impossible, to believe it in the present instance. I have known for certain of the same feat being performed by Turks with their crooked sabres,* but never by an Arab with his straight sword, though they can occasionally administer good

* When Ahmed Pacha Menikli conquered the rebellious (or rather *patriotic*) tribes of Taka, he collected some thirty or forty chiefs and men of note, and marched them off prisoners, to be butchered in the market-place of El Khartoum. Many of them, either from obstinacy or fatigue, halted on the march, refusing to proceed any further. Sulimàn Cushif, who commanded the escort, having orders that all such should be put to death on the spot, is said to have practised his swordsmanship on them by cutting them through the waist as they stood. My friend, Moussa Bey, in the same expedition, unintentionally cut a horse's head clean off. He was in command of an expedition, composed partly of Shàgeya (Arab) horsemen. Meeting with a very strong force of the enemy, some of his soldiers began to show symptoms of panic, and, the fight becoming disagreeably hot, the Shàgeya, either from treachery or nervousness, wavered. Moussa Bey, seeing one of them turn his horse's head, and make off for the jungle, determined to check so dangerous an example by summary means, and so gave chase to the fugitive. Being better mounted, he soon came up with him; but the Arab, not liking his appearance as he stood up in his stirrups with his nasty little crooked olive-brown blade, ready for a back stroke, threw his horse suddenly back on to his haunches, and dropped off: the horse's head went up just in time to receive the blow that was aimed at his master—the man got away among the bushes. I know plenty more such anecdotes.

downright blows:—witness the cannon which is kept at L'Obeyd, in Kordofan, the notches on which are evidence of the strength of arm and temper of blade of the Darfoury eunuch.

I have told these stories of murders, &c., without quite asking myself whether they had anything to do with the subject of which I originally proposed to treat. On looking back I think they may in some measure be said to bear upon it, and may be received as illustrative anecdotes. On this account I have changed the heading of the chapter from what it originally was, "Morals, Character," &c., to what I have it now. I dare say that from the first part of the chapter some of my readers may have anticipated that I was about to show off the Abyssinians as combinations of everything that was good and laudable, and in consequence may have been disappointed in the result. On the contrary, fearing lest the character I was about to give of them might be considered as harsh, if understood to be applied to the nation in general, I thought necessary to preface it, in order to point out that the opinion one may form of a people from a few glaring instances of crime, or even from some deeds of an opposite nature, whether of valour or benevolence, ought not to be criterions of the entire nation. I should say of the Amhàra soldiers, and frequently of the townspeople who have had much intercourse with them, that they are for the most part excessively vain. This is their chief and besetting sin. They are also rather cowardly, very deceitful and treacherous, grasping and covetous,

vicious, debauched, and thievish. While as to the peasantry, of whom the ordinary traveller sees little and hears less, though they form the majority of the nation, I should say that, barring ignorance and poverty, they have as few sins or vices to be laid to their charge as any people under the sun. I am speaking of the Tigrèans. I know little of the Amhàras except the soldiery, of whom I have just spoken in no very flattering terms.

The Abyssinians in general are patronizingly condescending towards their inferiors, and rather disposed to be servile when in the presence of a superior. They are at all times overflowing with complimentary speeches, which, however, must not always be taken as proceeding from the heart. The soldiers in their manners are as much given to ceremony as any one, with much less sincerity. A soldier, sent perhaps on a message to you from some chief, will approach your room with the greatest possible appearance of respect. He will enter with his shoulders bare, and, as if feeling bashful before so much greatness, will remain for a few moments by the door, bowing low to your repeated salutations, and your requests that he will be seated. At last, as if having gained confidence, he will inform you, after approaching a few steps, that his master, Mr. So-and-so, sends you his compliments and "Good morning. How are ye since I saw ye? How are ye? How are ye? Very much." To this, on your answering "God be praised," he will make another bow, and remain where he is. Perhaps,

after a while, he will consent to be seated, with much show of disinclination to take such a liberty. Then again he will rise up and approach you a few steps, and deliver some other complimentary message from his master. This time he will seat himself near your couch without being asked. He will soon, however, rise again, and tell you in a confidential whisper behind the corner of his cloth what was the real purport of his coming: probably such as this—"Mr. So-and-so, my master, sent me to you, and desired me to say, How are ye (&c. &c. &c., *ad infinitum*), and to give you *this*." On which he, with the greatest mystery, pulls out from under his garment a very small jar of honey, which his respectable master had possibly filched from some old woman for the occasion.

But although I said that this was the *real purport* of his mission, I was wrong; it was only the ostensible one. This business, however, being transacted, he will advance still a trifle further both in his impudence and in a nearer approach to your seat, till, if by your manner he think that he has gained favour in your sight—that is to say, if you be anything but stiffly courteous to him—it's ten to one if it won't end in his dropping accidentally on to the edge of your couch, and at last sitting comfortably alongside of you. Then, all his humility disappearing, he will arrange his garments as pleases him best, and, making himself perfectly at home, tell you stories of his own and his master's greatness, and of their particular attachment to you. Rising at last, when either your "tedge" is all drunk or your society no

longer agreeable, he reassumes for a moment his mock humility, and, taking leave of you, begs you to give him a "balderabba," or, as I have before explained, to name from among your servants one who shall be his friend and spokesman whenever he may need to address you. To him he confides his secret—the *true* motive of his visit; and it becomes his balderabba's duty to hint to you when you ask him, that your friend Goetana Ita So-and-so, from whom you have just received a shilling's worth of honey (which cost him nothing), is very much in want of a piece of velvet, or a muslin turban, or perhaps both. At any rate, if the value of what is expected as a return for the offering do not exceed what you have received by more than its double, you may consider yourself lucky, and your friend a very disinterested man.

Talking about this trick of begging, I remember that while I was staying at Tokhulimny a man from the neighbourhood, with whom indeed I was not at all acquainted, brought me as a gift a jar of honey and some cakes of bread (*hansa*), and I, happening at the moment to be in want of both of these articles, accepted them with many thanks. Shortly after, I sent the man in return a present of about twice their value, taking them at the highest estimation. He sent back the money, saying that he had not brought the articles to sell, but as a gift. I replied, that what I had returned him was not as payment, but as a reciprocity of good will, and that, as he did not choose to take it, I was doubly obliged for his (as I thought) disinterested generosity. My servant

who bore this message came back, telling me that I was altogether wrong; that the man had denied any such liberal intentions; and that the meaning of this message was simply that I had not sent enough. Willing in all things to make myself agreeable, I again sent him the money, having added to it some article of trifling value, but much esteemed in the country. The man was still dissatisfied, and returned it a second time, with a rather impertinent message about his being a great man, and that as such he expected a great present. Already tired of the fool's importunity, I sent him his honey and bread, telling him, with my respects, that I knew nothing of him but from his gift; that had he sent me a fine horse, a silver-mounted shield, or a lion's skin, as other chiefs had done, I should have returned him a present from my own country of proportionate value; but judging by his offering that he was a rather poor peasant, I had chosen, as I thought, the best manner of remunerating him. I moreover begged that for the future both he and his presents might be kept as far as convenient from my neighbourhood. In this last, however, he did not obey me; for that very same evening he came himself, entreating me to receive his gift, assuring me that it was all a mistake, and that he should be very well satisfied with what I had at first offered him. I declined this arrangement, telling him, as was the fact, that I had sworn by the death of Shétou that I would not receive it: at the same time I expressed the greatest friendship for him; and the affair ended in my accepting a small pair of tweezers for extracting thorns,

and in his carrying away, as a proof of my esteem and love, a small *papier maché* snuffbox, with looking-glass lid, value 2*d.*, or thereabouts.

Some instructions which the Royal Geographical Society formerly published to assist travellers, by pointing out objects most worthy of their inquiries and remarks, directed especial notice to reports or facts connected with cannibalism. On this point I have little to say in respect of the Abyssinians. What follows is all that I have ever heard on the subject.

A great lady, now living in Gondar, is said to use either the blood or flesh of young children as medicine for a complaint from which she suffers. This story is so generally believed and reported all over Abyssinia that I should fear there must be at least some foundation for it. Several children are said to have been missing from time to time; but so cleverly were they kidnapped that suspicion could only suggest what had been their fate. At length a soldier of some note, living near to the house of this lady, missed his daughter, a little girl about six years old. He had last seen her playing with some other children, and, on inquiring of them, found that she had been enticed away from them into the suspected house. In his love for the child, forgetting the influence of the proprietress, who was a member of the greatest family in the land, the father burst open the door, and, rushing in, drew his sword, and threatened the females whom he met that he would kill them if his child were not produced. After a time she was brought to him from an inner room. The

woman who restored her to him declared that she had strayed in of her own accord, and affected great astonishment at his haste and passion, asking what he feared for the girl. She however, in tears and the greatest alarm, declared that she had been hung up by the legs.

This is one way in which I have heard the story related, while another informant assured me that the man had rushed in, and found the child actually hanging and senseless. The people of the country assert that the object of the hanging was to collect the blood, which was intended to be used medicinally.

A man who had been taken for robbery and murder confessed, previously to his execution, that he had murdered at different times nine men and a nun, and had tasted the flesh of one of the men. His body was refused burial, and was thrown out to the wild beasts.

A servant of mine related to me that two soldiers came one evening to his country (a province in Amhàra) and stole two small children, and put them into sacks. A lad who was near them, seeing this, ran into the village, and related what had happened to his comrades. The soldiers were pursued, and, owing to their loads, would have been overtaken, had they not, perceiving their danger, dropped their booty, sacks and all, and made off as quickly as possible. It is supposed that the children were intended as medicine for Maro Warreynia, a Galla by origin, and chief in the neighbourhood where the attempted robbery took place, and who was suffering from hemorrhoids or dysentery.

For the Abyssinians I must say that neither the

former nor the latter of these tales affect their character at all; as, though now living and ruling in Abyssinia, the family of Ras Gouxa, to which both the lady (whose name by the way is Gouxa Herrùt) and the chieftain Màro belong, is not Abyssinian, but imported from a Galla country, called Yedjo.

Some people state that the flesh of these little victims is not eaten itself by the patient, but is used as food for sheep, whose flesh, thus fattened, becomes medicinal. The accounts of the manner in which the herbivorous animal is induced to partake of such unnatural diet are two. Some say that the flesh is dried and powdered, and then mixed with the sheep's ordinary food; while others say that the poor creatures are crammed with human flesh as we cram turkeys. A child, led three times round a woman who is troubled with the flux, and then butchered, is, I have been told, considered a sure remedy.

As regards the truth of these stories, of course no one can vouch for it; but of the *probability* of such extraordinary remedies being employed, and even considered efficacious, I cannot doubt, having myself witnessed many practices equally absurd. I believe there is no question that in some parts of Abyssinia (Walkayt and Waldabba) the flesh of men slain in battle is preserved, dried, and powdered, to be used in cases of sores; and I have heard that if, during an interval when no battles have occurred, there should arise a scarcity of the article, a bit or two may be occasionally procured from the tomb of some one who has died a natural death.

A man of my acquaintance, and in whose word I should be inclined to place confidence, told me that when quite a boy he had lived at Waldabba, and that, while there, his friends had always forbidden his straying far from the houses about the season of St. John's Day. This anniversary, as we have shown in a former chapter, is the great day for the casting out of devils, and curing of diseases otherwise incurable. It will also be remembered that an animal led round the patient, and then slaughtered as an offering, forms a part of the ceremony.

As for the case of the murderer who had tasted human flesh, no one will, I suppose, care to question that fact, as all my readers must have heard that shipwrecked seamen and others have been obliged to eat it. "This," they will say, "was of necessity; but why did your Abyssinian ruffian do it? Was it from hunger?" To this question I could answer "I don't know; but perhaps it was from curiosity." If such a motive should be deemed improbable, I have only to add that I can bring evidence of its having occurred without going so far as Abyssinia; for I have often heard a friend of mine tell how, in his younger days, he and some fellow students of medicine in France partook, from curiosity, of some "*cotelettes de dragon!*" cut from a poor soldier who had died in a hospital from wounds received in a riot at Lyons.

Incest is looked upon by the Abyssinians in its proper light. Few are the instances which are to be heard of its occurrence. I only remember two or three; and in these the heinousness of the crime seems to have made

such an impression on the feelings of the guilty persons as to have led them to confess their sin publicly, fearing less the reproach of the world than the more penetrating "still small voice" of conscience.

When the Aboun or Coptic Patriarch was passing through Tigrè, immediately after his importation from Egypt, to receive the people, he remained occasionally in the neighbourhood of notable churches and monasteries, whither they came to confess, or to gladden their hearts by the sight of so much holiness. Once, at Mariam Shoitou, a man, unable to approach him by reason of the crowd, mounted on a large stone, and shouted to the Patriarch—"Oh, my father! forgive me!" The Aboun inquiring what was the matter, a priest desired the man to speak. He confessed that he had been living with his sister as man and wife, and that they had a child. On this being translated to the Aboun, he expressed his great horror of the crime, and ordered the man, for penance, that he should retire from the world, and, living on the mountains as a hermit, pass the remainder of his life in prayer and fasting. Not even the repentance of the man or the severity of this sentence could satisfy the offended minds of the populace. They hooted him out of the place; and even his own acquaintances turned away their heads in disgust as he passed them.

In the Amhàra country a woman confessed that, her daughter being married to a very handsome man, she, falling in love with her son-in-law, poisoned her own daughter, and, marrying the widower, had three chil-

dren by him. The directions she received from the Patriarch were, that she should, by begging alms, support her husband, who was then blind, and the children, and pass her life in prayer and humiliation.

* * * * *

Thus much I have related as illustrating the character of the Abyssinians. I do not know whether I have succeeded, but hope my anecdotes will have proved entertaining to some of my readers. I can however assure them that if they judge of the people solely by these narratives they will be greatly in error, for I have only told a few striking occurrences of the worst possible nature.

"Why have you not said anything on their good points?" it may be asked. I answer, simply because anecdotes of benevolence, justice, fidelity, &c., are rarely interesting enough either to become topics of conversation where they happen, or to amuse an English public. From this I wish my reader to infer that I have touched severely on the dark side of the Abyssinian character; and for the bright, shall only say, that among the unsophisticated peasantry of Tigrè there exists a full average proportion of good qualities.

One more remark. On reconsidering this chapter, I find that, with the exception of Wàssan, nearly all the heroes of the above anecdotes are either Amhàras or Gallas; and this again, though it speaks very little in favour of my having stuck to my subject of describing Tigrè and its people, speaks highly of the nation I intended to describe.

NOTE.—I have once or twice abused the Amhàras, and feel now rather uncomfortable lest I should be accused of partiality by some of my fellow travellers, who, from having lived among them, are quite as Amhàric in their prejudices as I am Tigrèan. I once had an amicable dispute with my friend Mr. Antoine D'Abbadie on the subject, he abusing the people of Tigrè like pickpockets, and I doing the same by his friends. In general I refer to the Amhàra soldiery in Tigrè, for I profess to know nothing about the peasantry at home. I hated the name of Amhàra, and never permitted the language to be used in my house, though I understood it pretty well. All this may appear very prejudiced, but it should be remembered that everything Amhàric that one sees or hears of in Tigrè is of the worst description. Notwithstanding, I still believe that the Tigrèans are by far the better set of the two.

CHAPTER XXXV.

GOVERNMENT, LAWS, ETC.

WHILE in Abyssinia I collected a good deal of information on these interesting subjects: my papers on them, however, shared in the loss I sustained; and, from their being of a nature not so easily remembered as ceremonies which one has witnessed, and such-like striking occurrences, my memory and the few scanty notes which I retained have assisted me less perhaps in this than in any other part of the work, always excepting geography.

I need not enter much into the general divisions of Abyssinia. These particulars have been brought before the public by other writers, and even may have been gleaned by some of those who have plodded thus far through these volumes.

Suffice it, then, to say, that the formerly vast empire of Æthiopia, whose influence extended from Sennaar and Tàka southward to the other side of the Galla countries (no one, I believe, knows exactly how far), and from nearly the White Nile to the Red Sea in longitude, consists now of several independent kingdoms

or principalities. Three of these may be called Abyssinian, being inhabited for the most part by Christians. The first is the Amhàra country, lying west of the Taccazy, and extending from that river to the independent Shangalla or negro tribes, and from the frontiers of the Galla country, formed by the Abbai or Blue Nile, which there runs in a westerly direction, to the Atbara, a torrent which forms a sort of boundary between the Amhàra provinces and those of some Arab tribes belonging to the former kingdom of Sennaar, now conquered by the Turks, and considered as a province under the Pashalik of Egypt.

The second Abyssinian country is called Tigrè, although, like its neighbours, it takes this name from a small province in the kingdom, which alone is properly so called. Tigrè is contiguous to the Amhàra country, lying to the east of it, and divided from it by the river Taccazy. Its natural eastern frontier is the Red Sea. To the north it is separated from the Nubian or Sennàry provinces by a number of small independent tribes, —as the Bàzas, Bidéles, Habhabs, Boghos, Tsada Coustans, &c.; while on the south are the Azobo Gallas and other tribes.

The third country is called Shoa, and is entirely detached from the other two, lying to the south of them, and being separated from them by the Azobos, Wollos, and other Gallas, before mentioned. It is surrounded on all sides by more or less independent tribes,—as the Adaiels, Somaulis, &c., to the eastward, and the Gallas to the west and south-west.

The language of Tigrè resembling very nearly the Giz or ancient Æthiopian, of which it is, in fact, a dialect, would lead one to suppose that it is the most ancient, and perhaps the original spoken language of the country. The people of Shoa and the Amhàras use in common the Amhàric language, which would appear to be of more recent date, having only a few roots from the Giz.

The remainder of what was Æthiopia is made up of the Galla and negro tribes above mentioned.

These may be considered as the natural geographical divisions of the country, and also as those most generally adopted in common conversation. Properly speaking, all that I have mentioned as west of the Taccazy ought not to be regarded as Amhàra; for we have the provinces formerly governed by the chief of Simyen, and at that time dependent on the ruler of the Amhàras; but now, since the petty chieftains of Simyen have added the kingdom of Tigrè to their government, under the rule of Oubi, their original possessions have of course become, politically speaking, attached to their newly acquired territory. From Tigrè also, as we have allotted it, should be taken the strip of land along the Red Sea, which is under the rule, or rather protection, of the Sublime Porte.

These considerations, however, have little to do with our present subject. Only remembering always that no Prince, however powerful, would venture to arrogate to himself the title of Emperor of Abyssinia—a right belonging only to the lineal descendants of Solomon the

Great, it will be understood that the titles of Ras (head or chief), as used by the actual sovereigns of Amhàra and Shoa, and of Dejasmatch, which is all that Oubi pretends to, mean nothing whatever in regard to the power exercised by these princes. Dejasmatch, or (as it is more commonly called when coupled with a name) Dejatch Oubi, has a score of subjects, including his own sons, who have the same nominal rank as himself. As regards his true station, it is that of absolute ruler of a feudal kingdom.

The whole of Tigrè is divided into provinces, or shoumàt. Some of the smaller of these are held on particular tenures, being "goult," or, as it were, free gifts from some king to the Church, or occasionally to private individuals, and free from taxation. The remainder are held by chieftains, some of whom are hereditary, others chosen by the sovereign from among his followers, and all of these latter pay regular tribute or tax to the government.

Formerly, in the times of the empire, there was greater regularity in the partition of this kingdom, which then consisted of forty-four counties or provinces, called in the Tigrè language "addy negarit," or drum countries, as they conferred on their chief the right of having a band of drums beating before him when he went in procession, on a march, or to battle. The rank of "bàl negarit," or owner of drums, confers the same privileges and the same station as that of Dejasmatch, the title only being wanting. Most of the drum countries were or are held by chiefs of this latter rank; a few only are

not so: but this does not imply that their governors are a whit inferior to the others. The chiefs of Agami, Selloa, Agow, &c., beat the drums as loud as any one, and hold as high a place either in feast or field.

In speaking of these chiefs it is usual to prefix the name of their province to their own as a distinction, thus—"Shoum Agami Weld' Inchaël (chief of Agami Weld' Inchaël); Shoum Selloa Remha," &c. Now another lesser chieftain would be termed as simple Mr. Weldo Selassy, or whatever his name might be; and if it were thought necessary in speaking of him to explain that he was chief of such a country, it would be done thus—Mr. So-and-so, Chief of Antichau, &c.

As for Shoum Agami Weld' Inchaël, he was superior to most Dejasmatches, for he was son of Sabagardis, King of Tigrè.

These provinces are subdivided into lesser ones, whose governors are dependent on the great chiefs, and hold rank according to the size of their territory. At the present time there are only seventeen "addy negarits" remaining in Tigrè; the rest have been cut up and apportioned out to soldiers.

Some of the smaller "shoumàt" are called "addy ambilta," or "cunda," according to which of the two kinds of music their chief has a right: or "farraseynia," if they be given up to a parcel of soldiers. A few are called "waizero," and belong to the ancient nobility of the country.

When the King presents a man to a government, the gift is proclaimed by "owaje," or beating of drums in the

camp, and also in the market-place of the capital. For these purposes, as well as for any other proclamations, a big drum is kept expressly in each of these places. If the gift be of a large province, such as we have just described, the ceremony of proclamation would be something as follows:—The drummer, having collected a crowd by striking his instrument, and waving a stick or sheepskin over his head, declares in a loud voice that he has received the King's orders to proclaim the gift of such and such a country, from such a place to such another place (naming the boundaries), to Mr. Such-a-one, to be held by him as its chief, with right to govern it, exercise his authority, and punish offenders by imprisonment and flogging—cutting off the hand or feet, and death, being, properly speaking, referred to Oubi.

The taxes required by Oubi are of two kinds, one, called "werky," of ready money (that is to say, pieces of cloth, which pass for coinage or their value in dollars), and the other, called "fessassy," of corn. Besides these, the chieftain pays annually a "mashomia" or acknowledgment, which is a gift of cattle, honey, butter, arms, or anything else of value, as a sort of tenure by which he holds his land.

Every province, whether great or small, is subdivided into parishes or villages, over each of which is a "chikka" or taxgatherer. Now, to show how these men as well as their masters support themselves from the province, we will suppose that a tax of a thousand cloths is to be raised from a district containing ten equally-sized villages. Of course each "chikka" would

have to produce a hundred. By cleverly arranging his accounts and the distribution of the tribute, the tax-gatherer, in lieu of his proper number, collects perhaps a hundred and fifty. Of the extra fifty, a lion's share, say thirty, is put aside for the chief, while the remaining twenty are kept by the "chikka" and "toquotatàry" or accountant, as their remuneration. The chief would thus gain by this little transaction three hundred pieces of cloth. Similarly he gains on the corn tribute and "mashòmia." This latter is collected in quantities from the people, about St. John's Day and at Mascal. When the chief pays his annual visit of duty to the King he carries with him what he has selected from the mass, and leaves the remainder behind in his private store.

The governors of provinces have also a certain quantity of the cultivable land of each parish, which from time immemorial has been set apart for their use. This land a governor may employ at his pleasure; either he may keep it in his own hands, or he may let it. If he prefer the former, then he has a right to call upon the people for their labour; he can demand of them one day's work at the clearing and ploughing, one day for sowing, two for clearing the crop of weeds, and two for gathering in the harvest.

When I speak of letting the land, I do not mean exactly after our manner of receiving a fixed rent; for though this is occasionally practised, it is more common for the owner of the land to receive a proportion (sometimes half) of the crop.

This right of chief's land is another, though indirect,

source of gain to the hungry "chikka;" for if the villagers owning land do not take care to propitiate him with an occasional gift, he will declare that they have no right to their land, and prove, though falsely, that it is part of what rightfully belongs to his master. Nor is this by any means difficult to manage; for in this country there are no title-deeds to show, and few people would like to bear witness against their chief's interest.

The chief gains also by "Dainynet," or fines for certain offences: for instance, a blow or bloodshed. If a man be killed in a quarrel, and the parties agree to receive payment instead of the slayer's blood, half of the ransom goes into the chief's pocket.

This fining system is frequently converted by bad men—especially in troubled times, when the throne is unstable, and men do much as they please—into a means of cruel extortion. For instance, a peasant, who is supposed to be wealthy, is, on some pretext, taken and bound. A sum is then fixed for his liberty, and the iron bracelet is knocked tighter and tighter every day—like our boot of former times—till it is actually driven into the arm, and the hand dies. The poor prisoner, who perhaps has no means, having paid up all that he possessed, and collected as much as he can from the generosity of his friends, remains thus tortured, till chance, change of government, or death liberates him.*

* I have mentioned the system in some former chapter, and cited the case of young John Coffin, son of a countryman of ours, who died in prison, having been confined and tortured as I have described by Oubi—not for

When a man quarrels with his wife, the cause is brought before the chief. If they determine to decide the case by separating, the judge claims a fine from each of them, more especially if the cause of the quarrel be about the partition of their property.

On a new governor's arrival at a province, if there be no house ready for his reception, the people are obliged to build him one, and, in the meanwhile, to furnish him with a suitable lodging. Seeing of how simple construction are even the hut palaces of the greatest chiefs, this latter privilege is not of so much real value as it might at first appear to an English reader.

Thus much for the chiefs and their perquisites. Of Oubi's mode of governing the country I need not say much, having already given, while speaking of other subjects, several anecdotes, from which it may be deduced that he rules the land with a pretty evenly-balanced rod, and that in some cases this rod becomes a rod of iron.

One very good plan has lately been adopted by him for the suppression of banditti and highway robbers—that of making the neighbouring villages responsible for any theft committed near to them. Thus, if one of the villagers be the guilty person, he is soon discovered, as every one of his neighbours is personally interested in the apprehension of the thief; and if the robber be a

the sake of money, but in hopes of his father giving himself up. Coffin was then on the coast, endeavouring to collect presents whereby to regain Oubi's favour, which he had lost by siding with his rival, Balgadda Araia.

stranger, it is more easy to track him, for every one who has seen a suspicious person about would be glad to volunteer his information, hoping thereby to aid in the conviction of the culprit, and save himself and his fellow-villagers from the fine or other punishment which would otherwise be inflicted on them.

Moreover, this law induces the people to come readily to the help of any traveller who may be waylaid and need their assistance. The great drawback to anything like perfection in these matters is, that a malefactor has only to cross the frontier and take refuge in another country to be safe from the pursuit of justice. Nay, more: there are many provinces under Oubi's rule which, from being distant or rather unsafe, are little attended to. These are again places of refuge for evildoers. In fact, Oubi's police regulations (to give the European designation, though no such a thing as police exists) may be said to be confined to the limits of the great roads, as many a robbery, or even murder, may be and is committed in the less frequented districts without his ever hearing of it. The only chance of these offences coming to light depends upon the injured person's station in life. If he have relations of influence they will make some exertions in pursuing the aggressor; but if, on the contrary, he be poor or a stranger in the province, having no protection but the laws to look to, he may be murdered with impunity, and no one will care to inquire who did it.

One instance of Oubi's method of dealing justice struck me as so original that I could not help noting it

down.' In some parts of the country it is a very common practice, especially among the Mohammedans, to steal away children and sell them as slaves at Massàwa. Once a man of that religion enticed away a young woman of about sixteen years of age, pretending to hire her as a servant, and offering her high wages to induce her to follow him on his trips to the coast and back. She entered his service, and, to lull suspicion, he took her on one or two short journeys and brought her safely back with him. With this both she and her friends were perfectly contented, especially since from time to time the man made her handsome advances of money on account of her wages. At last he started for the coast, taking her with him, and treating her as usual on the road. On his arrival there, however, he sold her to a slave-merchant, and then returned to another part of Abyssinia. The province where the girl's friends resided was in a rather remote part of the country, and the fellow had hoped that, being poor and obscure, they would not think of seeking for him or her at such a distance. In this, however, he was mistaken. Weeks and months elapsing without any tidings of the master or servant reaching her friends, they set about making inquiries respecting them, and at last gained sufficient information at Massàwa to lead them to suspect both what had become of the girl and also that the Mohammedan had returned into Abyssinia.

It happened that one of the girl's uncles was a soldier, who, having distinguished himself in some manner, had been raised by the King to a small government and

to the command of a few men. The distracted parents immediately had recourse to this relation, whose importance and greatness were doubtless magnified in their estimation proportionally to their own insignificance. The soldier entered into the matter with the utmost determination, and, having appealed to Oubi, obtained a promise that justice should be done him. Accordingly, the delinquent himself having escaped out of the way, Oubi summoned the principal members of his family and the chief men among the Mohammedans, and ordered them to restore the woman to her friends. They replied by asking how that was possible, seeing that she had been sold on the coast, and that, a long time having elapsed, she had probably been long since resold in Arabia, or even in Egypt.

Oubi cut the matter short by telling them that he knew nothing either of possibilities or impossibilities, but that the girl must be found: moreover, that, as in his mind one Christian subject was worth any number of Mussulmen, and that this one being a female might have increased the population by a number unknown of little Christians, and considering as he did that this practice among those of their race was nothing but an attempt at diminishing the proportion of true believers among his subjects, he did not choose to treat the present case as that of an individual crime, but as part of a religious conspiracy. On this account he thought himself as a Christian justified in raising a counterplot, to neutralize their designs against his faith. So he fixed a time (I believe a month) wherein they were to find her

out, even if she were at the bottom of the sea; telling them that if at the expiration of the time they had failed, two of the principal men of their religion should die,—and so on, every succeeding month, until either the lost one were found or their accursed race were extinct in his dominions.

They, knowing that Oubi's word was like the law of the Medes and Persians, stirred themselves in the matter, and in a short time a considerable sum of money was collected, and persons were scattered in every direction in search of the girl. She was traced to Jedda; but it was not without great difficulty, and even I believe the interference of the Turkish Governor, that her then owner could be induced to part with her, at about four times as much as she had cost him. The news of her having been found and repurchased arrived either just in time to save the lives of the first couple of men, or just after their death; but I forget which.

As for the laws of the country, they are for the most part formed on the basis of the old Mosaic dispensation. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" is followed nearly to the letter,—so much so, that, as we have before said, if a man kill another, the murderer must be put to death by the nearest relatives of the deceased, with precisely the same kind of weapon as that with which he killed his victim.

To exemplify this custom:—Two little boys were playing in the woods near a village. Wandering about they chanced to see a tree called "owleh," on whose branches was a quantity of ripe wild fruit. The fruit is

not very delicious, not more so than the hips and haws found on our hedges; yet any one who can remember the pleasure with which in his boyish days these berries were collected and eaten, will excuse our young heroes when I relate how, having looked upon the fruit, they longed for it. But though the "owleh" is not usually of very large growth, still the lowest branches were above their reach. To climb the tree was an arduous task, for these children were but of the ages of eight and five. The temptation, however, proved superior to the obstacles, and the elder boy with some difficulty succeeded in reaching the desired object. Higher and higher he mounted, till at last he stood on a bough from which he could gather the best fruit; and then with what feelings of joy and pride at his superior age and powers did he help himself, and throw down a supply to his little companion! But "pride will have a fall!" and whether in this case it was brought about by the bough's breaking or his foot's slipping I cannot well remember; but, however it may have been, the adage proved true, and down came our climber right on the head, and nearly down the throat, of his little comrade, who happened at that moment to be standing with up-turned eyes and expectant mouth, waiting a fresh shower of the golden berries. The elder lad got up unhurt beyond a few bruises; but, to his horror, his friend rose not from the ground. He shook him, spoke to him, pinched him; but all to no purpose. The little fellow was dead!

The elder child, shocked and frightened at having so unwittingly caused his companion's death, ran blubbering

home, and told his mother all about it. The story got wind in the village, and the parents of the deceased child brought home the body, and set up howling and lamenting over it. Moreover, nothing would satisfy them but that the elder boy should be put on trial for his life, as having been the cause of the other's death. This they urged in the hope, no doubt, of a compromise in money from his family, or, in other words, making the best they possibly could of a bad business.

The trial was long; but after much examination of the different books, and many opinions taken of the wisest men in the country, it was ultimately concluded that of a truth the boy was by law guilty of death.

But how was he to be killed? Why, of course, as he had killed the other: so in fact the sentence was, that the dead boy's brother should climb the tree and tumble down on the other's head till he killed him. This however did not suit the deceased's mother's feelings; for, thought she, "If I consent to this, perhaps my other boy may die, or injure himself in his fall more than him whom he has to kill." So she preferred letting the culprit off to risking the life of her only surviving son.

This story may appear a caricature. All I can say in favour of its credibility is, that I heard it related by a highly respectable individual, in a large party, where I was the only man not an Abyssinian, and the only person who appeared to consider it as at all improbable.

The punishment for theft varies according to the circumstances under which the offence may be committed. Some thefts, such as sacrilegious ones, are deemed worthy

of death, or amputation of the hands or feet; while others, of an ordinary kind, are considered as sufficiently expiated by imprisonment or a sound flogging. This latter is a severe punishment, and from the manner in which it is administered appears to me to be a very effectual one. The whip used is such as commonly serves for urging the plough oxen in their labour. It is enormously long and heavy, and rejoices in the characteristic sobriquet of "the giraffe." The first stroke from this formidable flagellator, if well applied, will often draw blood, even if it do not completely cut out a piece of skin. The mode of using it on criminals will be seen from the following story:—

During the absence of Dejatch Oubi on a war expedition, a man robbed a poor woman on the road of some pieces of cotton cloth, such as are used for money. She ran towards the nearest village, crying out for help, and at last induced some of the people to pursue the robber. They caught him; and the pieces of cloth found on him, being of the number and quality described by her, were sufficient proof of the truth of her accusation to induce them to send him bound to Wàssan, who was acting as governor of the country during his master's absence. Witnesses were called, who identified the cloth as the woman's property; and the thief, being convicted of the offence, was sentenced to be publicly whipped. Saturday, being the market-day, was fixed upon for the execution of his sentence, as on that day many people would be collected together. The culprit was brought into the market-place, and stripped, all but

his inexpressibles. A man on each side held him with a long cord, tied to his hands, while another, brandishing the formidable "giraffe," walked behind him. In this procession he was led about among the people, and forced to exclaim after every blow, which fell with fearful force and at regular intervals, "All ye who see me thus, profit by my example!"

The following is an instance of sacrilege and its punishment. Three men entered a church for the purpose of plundering it. Two of them purloined the incense-bowls, while the third appropriated to himself some gold ornaments from a picture representing the Madonna and Child. The trinkets were attached to the neck of the infant Saviour, and to the breast, head, and arms of the Virgin. Part of these stolen articles were given by the thief to a woman of the town, and she incautiously allowed them to be seen by some of her acquaintances, who, in their turn, let the secret out, till it came to the ears of the authorities. She was taken, and compelled to confess whence she had received them, and what she knew of the culprits. From the information thus obtained, one of the men was pursued; and at last, being apprehended, confessed his guilt, and declared who were his confederates. They also were captured; and at their trial it came out that they were the same parties who had committed a similar sacrilege some time before, but had escaped conviction. He who had stolen the ornaments was adjudged to be the most guilty, and was sentenced to be hanged. Each of the others lost his right hand and left foot.

It is singular that here, as in Europe, the executioner claims, as his perquisite, the wearing apparel and arms of the sufferer. The latter also usually offers him a bribe to do his job quickly and skilfully, else he will from spite linger as long about it as possible,—sawing off the limb rather than cutting it. The operation is performed with a small crooked knife; and, if the executioner be well propitiated, he will instruct his patient how to hold his hand, spread his fingers, &c., that he may get more readily at the joint. He may sometimes be even induced to give himself the trouble of putting an extra superfine edge on his instrument.

I don't know whether I shall tire my readers with a number of anecdotes. Some people may say that I might have drawn my own conclusions on the subject in discussion, and given these to the reader, instead of putting him to the trouble of summing up so much matter, and forming an opinion for himself. Now, the reasons I have for not following this latter method are, that it is not at all amusing for a writer to have to deduce inferences, nor easy for him to express them clearly and satisfactorily. Neither would it be interesting to the reader to have to plod through the narrator's deductions, were they ever so logically arranged. Besides, what opinions I may have formed, or knowledge I may have gained of the people, whether in respect of their manners and customs, character, or other peculiarities, was derived from these and like anecdotes which have been related to me, or occurrences which I have witnessed. If I succeed in repeating or

describing these at all faithfully, I shall, as it were, place in the reader's hands the very books from which I learnt my lesson.

I have a great horror of courts of law, trials, &c., and can fairly say that I never attended one in England. I have done so in Abyssinia, because, from the part I took in the affairs of the natives, I was sometimes obliged to be present at their judicial proceedings.

I shall proceed to relate a rather characteristic trial for manslaughter, in which a friend of mine figured as defendant, and which will exemplify many of the legal peculiarities to which I have previously alluded.

During my stay at Tokhulimny, one Saturday, going as usual to Addàro for the market, I found that my old friend Hajji Aman, at whose house I generally put up, had gone out to discuss an affair about the occupation of some land. By the by, he was the very man whom it will be remembered I met on my way to Addàro, previously to my first visit to that town, and who so civilly offered me a lodging there. The dispute about the land was this:—It appears that it belonged to a lady called Wozro Desta; that Aman had occupied it for a length of time, till now; another Mohammedan, named Hajji Abd el Kàder, finding that it lay conveniently adjacent to his own, had secretly outbid him in the rent. The lady had consented to the arrangement, which was very unfair; for although there are no leases in the country, still the custom is that a landlord never discharges his tenant so long as he pays his rent, and otherwise conducts himself irreproachably.

I suppose some words had arisen from this cause; and, in order to settle the matter, it was agreed that the disputants should meet on the spot and talk it over, in the hope, I imagine, of ultimately coming to some arrangement satisfactory to all parties interested. Of these preliminaries I could never get a correct notion, each party giving out a story diametrically opposite to the other: but they are of no importance whatever to the present subject. All I know is, as I said, that the two parties had gone to meet on the disputed ground. Aman was accompanied only by his two sons, Saïd and Ibrahim, and by a servant, while Abd el Kàder, evidently predisposed for a trial of force rather than of reason, had with him his four sons and five other persons. Moreover his party were all armed, some with swords, others with clubs, while of those with Aman, Ibrahim only carried a sword.

The dispute waxing warm, and perhaps not tending to favour their pretensions, Abd el Kàder's party determined to try another argument wherewith to beat their adversaries, namely, the substituting of might for right. So, as a beginning, one of his sons with a club knocked down Aman's servant from behind, breaking his head and stretching him on the ground senseless, and nearly lifeless. The old man followed this good example by seizing hold of my friend, who was still older than he, and after a momentary tussle dragged him off his mule, and, in the fall getting him under, proceeded in the most unfair manner to "hit him when he was down," with a stick. His son Ibrahim, naturally of a phlegmatic disposition, seemed at this moment to

have but half an idea as to what was going on; but Saïd, who, though blessed with a rather excitable temper, is at bottom a very excellent fellow, seeing his father in danger, snatched the sword from his apathetic brother, and, drawing it, gave old Abd el Kàder a slight blow on the forehead, more (as he afterwards assured me) with the object of frightening him than of injuring him. In truth I saw the wound a few minutes after, and it appeared scarcely deep enough to lay bare the skull. The old man was thus *hors de combat*, as also Aman's servant.

Although, numerically speaking, the loss was equal on both sides, still in point of force that of Aman's was decidedly the greatest, for it had lost the services of a young and able man. Notwithstanding this they were more than equal in courage to their adversaries; for, on arriving at the spot at this critical moment with a number of people, I found the stronger party taking a passive line of conduct, retreating, and threatening law, while Saïd and Ibrahim, the latter of whom had just begun to be fully alive to what was taking place, were threatening more summary proceedings. We separated the combatants, both sides being our friends, and neighbours to each other, their houses adjoining, and the Chief's people, who were there, bound the principal actors in the fray.

The wounded men were carried to their respective houses, and a guard remained in the court-yard to prevent anything unpleasant from occurring during the night. Next day I returned to my home at Tokhulimny,

having just heard the news of the death of Abd el Kàder, which occurred early in the morning; old age and ill temper having aided the otherwise slight wound in producing this result.

As for Aman's servant, who received the ugly knock on the head, his wound was so serious that his life was despaired of. The club was indeed a formidable weapon, about two feet long, and made of the natural stump of an "agam" bush, which is very hard and heavy, with a knob near the roots of about twice the size of a man's fist.

As I shall have nothing more to say about this man, it is as well to finish off at once his history; for, thanks to his youth and an unimpaired constitution, he recovered his health after about eight months' confinement to his bed; though I fancied, when last I saw him, that his ideas were not quite so bright as they used to be.

The sons of Abd el Kàder determined that Saïd should be tried for his life, and the trial was appointed to come on in a fortnight. I had been requested to attend as a witness, and of course had consented to do so. A few days, however, before the appointed time, a messenger came to me from Hajji Aman, begging of me that I would attend with as many people as possible in my train, as he said it was currently reported that force would be resorted to by the prosecutors, if they found themselves unable to gain their point by fair means; and, moreover, he had been informed that their friends were mustering in great numbers.

The place chosen for holding the court was near the

church of Addy Gaddiva, a village not far from the dwelling of the Chief, Ato Merratch. It was a lovely grassy spot, on the top of a small hill, on which grew several large trees, under whose shade we sat in judgment. Merratch's two Belladt Inkaters, or counsellors (Ato Habo Georgis and Ato Osseràvil), officiated in his absence; for he preferred staying at home on pretence of sickness to risking his precious body in the conflict which was likely to ensue. Nor was he without just reasons for his prudence; for from what I heard, both before and after the trial, it was not at all probable that his rival, Gabro Wahed, would let such an opportunity occur without having his agents mixed in the crowd, and ready to pick off the Chief *accidentally*, if a fight could be got up.

I have in a former chapter told who this Gabro Wahed was—how from a "watta," or buffoon, and itinerant musician, he rose to wealth and power, and aimed even at his former master's government. Taking a line of politics opposed to Welda Selassy (Merratch's father, and then chief of Addy Abo), he favoured the accession of the usurper Oubi, and at the death of his chief, and consequent imprisonment of his son, put himself forward for the chieftainship, which he succeeded in obtaining from Oubi, then confirmed in the government of Tigrè.

On Merratch's release from confinement he returned to his home, where he found his father's former servant enjoying the position which, by right of succession, should have been his. Though comparatively speaking poor,

and without means of annoying him, Merratch's influence with the people, who loved him, while they detested their upstart chief, so alarmed Gabro Wahed that he seized the lad and bound him. He may indeed have had no other motive in this piece of tyranny than that of extorting from him what little he still possessed of his father's savings.

This happened when Oubi was absent on the Devra Tàbor expedition. Aspha Wassan, son of Nebrid Welda Selassy, then one of the most powerful chieftains in the country, remonstrated with Gabro Wahed in favour of his friend Merratch, but to no purpose. So he took arms and marched on Addy Abo. The "ex-watta," unable to cope with him, fled to the almost desert country beyond the Mareb, taking his prisoner along with him. Aspha Wassan, having pillaged and burned the country, remained there for some time.

When on the news of Oubi's defeat Balgadda Araia assumed the throne of Tigrè, he arranged this quarrel by reinstating Gabro Wahed in the government of Addy Abo, on the condition that he should liberate Merratch and make friends with Aspha Wassan. However, as will be remembered, Oubi's sudden and unexpected appearance knocked on the head the Balgadda's arrangements and hopes of the kingdom. Merratch went and met him, and poured at his feet the long tale of grievances which he had suffered during his absence at the hands of Gabro Wahed; incensed at which, or more probably at his having sided with his rival Araia, Oubi took the offender and bound him, restoring to Merratch

his paternal government. Moreover, Gabro Wahed had the satisfaction of being informed that he must produce three thousand dollars before he need hope to recover his liberty. He declared himself willing to pay the sum, but at the same time protested his inability to do so unless he were allowed to go to his own country and collect it.

After detaining him three months Oubi consented to this proposal on his producing three sureties, who were to be responsible for a thousand dollars each, if he took it into his head to run away. Our old friend Hajji Aman was one of the three who volunteered as bail. But, notwithstanding, Gabro Wahed *did* run away, and his sureties were seized for the payment of the dollars. The fact was, as I have understood, that he had arranged with them that it should be so, thinking he had better get out of the way at once; and I believe neither of the three lost a farthing by the transaction, but that he ultimately made it all right to them.

I had a proof of Aman's worth, and a new motive for cultivating his friendship, on the occasion of his being called upon to pay his share of the forfeited money. I had willingly lent a comparatively small sum to assist him in his difficulty, for I was indebted to him for much kindness that he had shown me. He promised to return the loan to me in a month, but, knowing what a bad reputation his countrymen have as paymasters, even when not pressed by circumstances as he was, I had made up my mind to regard as a gift rather than a loan the sum which I had advanced to him. To

my surprise, however, on sending for corn and other necessaries at the next market, my servants returned with the money they had taken intact, as Aman had insisted on furnishing me with all I required in repayment of the loan, and even at a lower rate than I could have bought the things elsewhere. By this means, and a little ready money which he occasionally sent, the debt was cancelled a week before the time he had promised; and with the last instalment I received a sheep and some honey and butter, by way of interest I suppose.

We arrived at the scene of the trial just in the nick of time, for the discussion was about to commence as we joined the party. Place was instantly made for me near the Belladt Inkaters; and although I was a witness, I was allowed, as a great distinction, to remain in the position of a judge. I was received by all my acquaintances with the usual amount of good nature and cordiality, and by those of the party who saw me for the first time with the ordinary proportion of expressions of curiosity.

It is amusing in this country to sit by and hear the remarks made on you by your neighbours. One who has never seen you may perhaps be conversing with an acquaintance of yours, and the following dialogue will ensue:—Qu. "What is his name?"—Ans. "Goetàna Aito Za Georgis."—Qu. "Whence comes he?"—Ans. "From beyond the Aboun's country."—Qu. "What is he?"—Ans. "A soldier: and I have heard from his servants that he is a great chief in his own

country, whence his friends send him a ship every year laden with sacks of dollars which they make for him!"

Many remarks on the person, disposition, &c., of the subject of their conversation would be added, all wonderfully exaggerated, and received by the inquirer with serious wonder and many exclamations of "Wah," "Extraordinary," &c. But the most amusing part of *my* case was, that the questions, answers, and remarks, were all made in a loud voice, just as if the speakers had thought that I did not understand the language. I should naturally have believed them labouring under this mistake had they allowed me, but they proved that it was not so by every now and then turning to me for the confirmation or correction of some doubtful point in the description of myself.

Just as we were comfortably settled in our places the Belladt Inkaters suggested that as a good number of people were already assembled it would be better to begin the proceedings at once than to lose time in idle discussion. This was a prudential step, for already the friends of the opposed parties had begun to talk over the dispute, and from talking they had proceeded to argue; and the argument was beginning to wax disagreeably warm. Accordingly arrangements were entered into for the prevention of confusion and quarrels. No one but the "shemmagillé," or old men (among whom I was included as an honorary member), were allowed to remain on the spot where we were. The servants and young men were ordered to separate, and to withdraw

to a considerable distance; the friends of Aman keeping the valley below, while the accuser's party remained on the tableland behind us.

These precautionary measures were highly necessary even as the matter now stood, but would, I fear, have been useless had the forces of Abd-el-Kàder mustered stronger than those of Aman. But if our little army of 150 lances, or thereabouts, overawed theirs of 120, how much more did our 23 guns (whereof more than half had accompanied me, being some of them my own servants, and others from a detachment of volunteers which I had enlisted at Rohabaita) leave in the shade their paltry 7 matchlocks!

The fighting-men being thus disposed of, none remained but the judges and elders. These latter were then separated, having to act as counsellors for the parties whose cause they espoused. The friends of Hajji Aman remained near us, while those of the sons of Abd-el-Kàder retired to some distance to consult together freely, only occasionally coming to us to ask the advice of the chiefs on some point, and to receive their propositions or those of the accused party; they then retired to consider the merits of such proposals and the propriety of their agreeing to them, again returning with an answer or an amendment, and thus, as nearly as possible, exemplifying perpetual motion.

The party of the defendant too, unless they had something particular to propose, or were desired to remain seated in order to receive some answer or hear some decision, usually rose at the approach of their

opponents, and removed to a distance, in order to allow of their having freedom of speech with the two Belladt Inkaters.

This going and coming continued for nearly three hours, during which time also the laws, both Christian and Mussulman, were referred to, and the few witnesses who had anything particular to say on the matter were examined. The final decision was, that death was the due of the slayer; but as Saïd was held in great esteem by all the neighbourhood, the principal men present agreed in private that they should frame some excuse for delaying the execution of the sentence, hoping meanwhile that the family of the late Abd-el-Kàder might be prevailed on to receive a sum of money in lieu of blood.

Two of Abd-el-Kàder's sons, as the prosecutors, and Saïd's father and brother on his part, then met for the first time during the trial, in order to discuss this question. They parleyed together for a long time, going and coming as before, until at last the plaintiffs were prevailed upon to consent to Saïd's being reprieved for one month. The old man, Hajji Aman, then begged to suffer in his son's stead, on the plea that the deceased, like him, was old, and that it would be a shame to kill a fine promising young man such as Saïd, whom so many would regret, for the sake of one whose foot was already in the grave; besides which he pointed out that the quarrel was his, and that his son only acted in his service, and did not strike till he felt compelled to do so in his father's defence. This petition

also was granted after a sufficient amount of argument and consultation had been gone through.

The parties then made oath to abide by the agreements thus entered into—namely, that the family of the deceased should in no way attempt to molest any of Hajji Aman's people until the appointed day, and that he would appear on that day, and give himself up for execution. His son Saïd, however, was kept bound as a hostage; his life being answerable for his father's appearance.

Thus terminated the events of the day, and, very contrary to the general expectation, every man retired to his home in peace and quiet (barring always a wrangle or two by the way), not, however, till late, for it was dark before we reached Tokhulimny.

Some days after I paid a visit to Belladta Habto Georgis, at whose house I had left the unfortunate Saïd in confinement, his right hand being chained to the left of Abdallah, one of the sons of Abd el Kàder. The night previous to my visit, the last-mentioned young man, thinking, doubtless, that it would do him credit to revenge his father's death, and being perhaps impatient at his protracted confinement, begged of one of Habto Georgis' servants to procure him a stone for a pillow. This was not an extraordinary request, as stones or blocks of wood are the usual pillows in Abyssinia. They complied by bringing him a very large one; he thanked them, and, placing it under his head, was, in a few minutes, snoring away comfortably. In reality, however, he was only shamming sleep with his eyes

shut, and waiting till his prisoner should be so without any mistake. No sooner did he perceive this to be the case, than, raising himself up stealthily, he lifted the stone, and dashed it down with all his force on the place where he had in the dark judged Saïd's head to lie. But he made a bad shot, only half scalping his intended victim, and hurting him just sufficiently to make him start up wide awake, and halloa, "Fire! thieves! murder!" &c. &c., as people usually do on such occasions. Hearing his cries, Habto Georgis came to see what was amiss, and, on being informed, caused the prisoners to be separated, and each to be bound to one of his own people.

This act of treachery proved in the end of the greatest possible advantage to the very man whom it was intended to injure; for some persons, influential friends of both parties, seized upon it as a good pretext to persuade the elder sons of Abd el Kàder that their wisest course now was to accept a compromise, as otherwise the accused party might claim to be set free, on account of Abdallah's having broken the oath, taken by the whole family, that no injury should be offered to any of the defendants. This reasoning could not, of course, have stood, had the prosecutors chosen to remain firm in their determination to accept of nothing but blood, for the assault could not be substantiated by Saïd's bare assertion, while Abdallah swore that the blow was purely accidental. It should be remembered that in Abyssinia there is no jury to decide on the merits of a case, nor does the opinion of the judge

alter the sentence. He has only to declare that the prisoner is or is not guilty of the manslaughter of which he is accused: if the former, death is the doom of the slayer.

It depends almost entirely on the relatives of the deceased whether, from any favourable circumstances, they choose to spare the life of the prisoner, and receive the price of blood in lieu thereof. In the present case, whether the sons of the deceased were really alarmed at the possible consequences of their brother's rashness, or whether they were as glad as their neighbours of any plausible excuse for compromising the affair, is a matter of doubt; but it ended in their acceding to the wishes of their friends. I rather suspect that they did so for the last-mentioned reason; for Abd el Bàghy, the elder brother, told me afterwards that it was difficult to take the life of an old neighbour and former friend, especially after the blood had been allowed to cool, and after listening to the entreaties of the whole neighbourhood.

So it was agreed to spare the old man's life, and the ransom was at first fixed at 600 dollars, 300 of which were to go to Lemma, Oubi's eldest son, as great chief of the province in which it occurred, and the remaining half to the family of the dead man. This large amount was of course objected to by the payers, and Ibrahim, Aman's son set off with a petition to Dejatch Oubi, stating the whole circumstances of the case, and praying for his decision. Oubi took a very just view of the matter, and, after sending to his son, reproving him for the exorbitance of his demand, reduced it to one third of

its original amount, adjudging 100 dollars to his son, and a like sum to the other party. The ransom money was speedily collected, for, though Hajji Aman solicited no one's assistance, many of his friends of their own accord came forward; some volunteering loans, and others freely subscribing, till the whole was paid.

Thus all ended well: only Aman was obliged, from motives of prudence, to leave his former dwelling, which was adjacent to, and communicated with, that of Abd el Bàghy, as it was suspected that the brothers still plotted to be treacherously revenged on him, notwithstanding that the ransom had been paid, and that they had renewed their former oath of keeping the peace.

In fact, to give my private opinion, although I have told the plausible motive assigned by Abd el Bàghy for sparing the old man's life, I never in my mind believed him capable of so much good feeling or tenderness of heart, —rare qualities indeed in any Abyssinian, and scarcely to be expected in the breast of the person of whom we are speaking, who, in common with his brothers, enjoys by no means a fair reputation. In truth I always attributed their consent to a longing after the ransom; and I have been told that it was commonly supposed that the rage and vindictive feelings which they expressed against the author of their father's death was altogether a make-believe for the sake of appearances, and that they were anything but grieved at their loss. Even more than this: I have been assured that one of the sons actually let out in conversation that, after all said and

done, their father was but an old and useless man, and that by his death they were rendered independent, and could hope to advance themselves in the world.

I have occasionally spoken of persons taking oaths in law cases. Among the Christians of Abyssinia it is not uncommon to settle a dispute about money matters (such as small debts or other affairs), when no witnesses can be produced, by one party's swearing to the validity of his claim. Even kings or chiefs, by a very solemn oath, confirm their promises of pardon to a rebel who may offer to return to his allegiance; but occasionally, as we have seen in a former chapter, promises, though thus consecrated, are broken through to suit the purposes of ambition, cupidity, or revenge.

There are many forms of swearing, one of which, considered as very binding, is called "Medammed." In taking this oath the swearer lights a little straw, which is placed in his hand on a layer of cowdung. When the straw is well ignited he extinguishes it by pouring water over it, and at the same time expresses a wish that his family may be burnt, and their memory blotted out from the face of the earth for seven generations, if he should violate his promise.

Others swear by the sword. Unsheathing one, they pray that, as surely as it is thus drawn in witness of their word, so surely may the holy Archangel St. Michael draw his to their destruction if that word should prove false. Similarly also by a gun or other weapon. Others again by the picture of St. George, placing their hands on his likeness, and calling upon him that should they

prove faithless he should direct his lance against them as formerly against the dragon.

But the most impressive and solemn oath is that which is taken in the church, when, for some important question, a man's opponent requires of him to be sworn in that holy place. The man is taken into the outer circle of the church to the place where the bodies of the dead are laid previously to burial. He is there stretched on one of the mats, which (as I have described) are used instead of coffins. Lying there, he makes his asseveration at the moment when the sacrament is being distributed, and calls upon the Almighty to record it, and to grant as a testimony that, should he have sworn falsely, he may return, after the space of three days, or seven at the most, to the mat on which he is now lying, never to leave it more.

It is, however, always considered a rather disgraceful action to call thus upon the Lord, or even on his saints, in matters of "filthy lucre," although, indeed, the cause be a just one, so much so, that many persons possessed of a good reputation, which they are scrupulous of in anywise sullying, in the event of being required to pay an unjust debt, or even an imaginary one, would place the amount in the hands of some trustworthy person to be paid over to the claimant, should he choose to perjure himself, preferring rather to risk their money than to be obliged to swear even to the truth.

Perjury is most justly looked upon as a horrible crime in this country as elsewhere. A man convicted of it would not only lose his reputation, and be for ever inca-

pacitated from bearing witness even on the most trivial question, but he would likewise in all probability be bound and severely fined, and might indeed think himself fortunate if he got off with all his limbs in their proper places, or without his hide being scored by the "giraffe" to the pattern of a leg of roast pork.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PHYSICAL CONSTITUTION.—DISEASES, MODES OF CURE, &c. &c.

THE reader need not be alarmed by the heading of this chapter. I am not going to lead him into a scientific dissertation on medicine, nor to philosophize on the causes of the many ills that Ethiopian flesh is heir to; this I can safely promise for various reasons; but principally that I am unacquainted with such matters, and moreover have a great distaste for them.

First, I would add a few words to what I have already said in favour of a low diet, and touch a little on the constitution of the natives of these countries.

There is no doubt that, by constant exposure to the air, plenty of exercise, low living, and a good deal of rough knocking about, the skin becomes hardened, the nerves deadened, and the whole system rendered less susceptible of inflammatory action.

Thus it is that their mode of life makes savages, all over the world, wiry and active, and endows them with what, to Europeans who have never tried the same system, appears a wonderful amount of endurance, either of hunger, thirst, fatigue, or actual pain.

Some nations, the North American Indians for ex-

ample, actually train themselves before undergoing any amount of premeditated suffering. I remember Mr. Catlin telling me of one tribe (the Mandans), among whom it was a custom for young men to go through a very severe ordeal before they could be considered as warriors. One part of this trial of fortitude consisted in being dragged, at full speed, round and round a piece of ground by large hooks stuck into the flesh of the novice, who was thus banged and bruised till the hooks tore themselves away from him, leaving him stretched on the ground senseless and apparently dead. Notwithstanding their usual hard life, and the habits of endurance to which they are early accustomed, these very Indians consider that three days' absolute fasting is requisite to enable them to survive the trial.

I have never noticed in Africa any education for the purpose of rendering men patient under suffering; nor does this power appear to be considered so meritorious —indeed so absolutely necessary to the character of a man—as it is among the tribes of whom we have just spoken. In Abyssinia, the only sort of bravado of this kind that I ever witnessed is mere child's play, nor can it indeed be said to be customary. Sometimes when a party of young men are seated together, the ladies present will bring bits of the pith of millet-straw, cut to about an inch long, and of the thickness of a man's thumb, or, what is better still, pieces of old rag, rolled tight, so as to form a pellet of similar dimensions. These are arranged in patterns by each lady on the extended arm of any one whom she may choose, and their

tops lighted. The only merit in the man is to allow them to burn themselves out entirely without moving his arm so as to cause them to fall, or evincing the slightest consciousness of pain either by word, look, or gesture; on the contrary, he must continue a flow of agreeable conversation, as if nothing was occurring. The lady operator usually blows her fires to keep them going, and the material, whether pith or rag, being of a very porous nature, and burning slow like tinder, the action of the fire is felt on the skin long before it actually reaches it. It is, in fact, an operation similar to the "moxa" of European surgery. When the pellets are completely burnt out, the lady rubs her hand roughly over the cauterized parts, so as to remove the burnt skin. On a copper-coloured person the scars, when well healed, assume a polished black surface, which contrasts very prettily with the natural skin. On a European they are scarcely distinguishable, the polish only remaining without any difference of colour. Out of ten marks that I had made on my arm on one occasion, only one shows well; it happened to be burnt deep, and I kept it from healing for three months, so as to leave a good scar. This is frequently done for the sake of ornament, without any bravado whatever.

While talking of ornaments, I may add that many of the African tribes have devices for adorning their flesh which would be considered as horribly painful by Europeans, but which they treat very lightly. Some of the Abyssinians make a flesh-bracelet on the wrist, by tightly tying round it a piece of root which possesses, or

is believed to possess, a corrosive property. After some time, at any rate, it eats into the flesh, so as to form a deep sore, which, when the root is removed, gradually heals, leaving, not merely an ordinary scar, but a perfect raised band, of the thickness of one's little finger: for the same purpose, they occasionally make gashes of an inch long or more on the arms or body, which also, when healed, leave raised scars, and are considered ornamental.

Among some of the genuine negroes, in the neighbourhood of Kordofan and elsewhere, the females are gashed in stripes all down the body and back, and the more the scars are raised the more beautiful is the ornament considered. I have seen slave-girls nearly covered with excrescences, sometimes of the size of a pigeon's egg, the appearance of which is almost disgusting to a stranger, though highly esteemed among themselves. I do not exactly know how this effect is obtained. I have often inquired whether they use any means to produce it, and have been told of various; but though I have made frequent experiments on myself, I never succeeded in procuring the desired beauty spots. Hence I am led to suspect that it depends much on the quality of the skin, and am confirmed in this opinion by two observations; first, that on a pure black hide the marks are much more prominent than on one of copper-coloured hue; and second, that I have seen scars certainly not intended for ornament, viz. those produced by a sound whipping, in quite as "alto-rilievo" as those intentionally made.

Still continuing to compare the power of endurance

or pain in a savage with that of a European, I might say that it has often struck me as singular that our soldiers in former times should suffer so much from a few hundred lashes with the cat. I never, of course, tried it myself, and therefore may be wrong, but believe that, if I were out in those countries, I could find many a black fellow who would take 500 willingly for a trifling consideration. A description of the mode of duelling practised in the neighbourhood of Dongola may serve to throw some light on this assertion, which may probably appear rash to many of my readers. I have already described (vol. i.) the way in which they fight at Sonàkin with crooked knives, so shaped as to cut well without any possibility of causing death; the Dongolawi's duel is conducted on exactly the same principle, and accordingly the victor is he who can receive the most wounds without shrinking or fainting. The only difference is in the weapon, a long heavy whip, made of a solid thong of hippopotamus-hide, tapering from the thickness of a stout walking-stick downwards; in its effects, however, it is equal to the knife, for every blow, if well delivered, cuts a deep furrow into the flesh. This duel is not a serious matter, but is engaged in by young men on the slightest possible pretext, often merely to display their manhood. An "angareb" (couch), under which a jar of beer is usually set (for refreshment between the rounds), is placed between the combatants, each of whom is stripped to the waist and armed with one of the formidable whips I have described. As soon as all is ready they begin, giving

alternate stripes on each other's shoulders, but neither being allowed to evade or ward off a blow; they continue this agreeable pastime for a very long time, till one falls down exhausted from loss of blood and the punishment he has received.

A still better proof of the capabilities possessed by these people for enduring beating, is the coolness with which they receive the terrific punishments so frequently inflicted on them by their Turkish governors. I myself have witnessed many instances of men of all ages, up to sixty and more, being laid down to receive several hundred blows. In Egypt these are given with the "courbatch," or hippopotamus whip, I have just described; but in the upper parts of Nubia, Kordofan, &c., the Turks, probably judging that the natives must be accustomed to this style of flogging from their frequent use of it among themselves, always punish with the "nabout;" this is a heavy stick or cane, about five feet long, and an inch in diameter,—often much more, seldom less. The culprit is laid down with his face to the ground, and held there by ropes tied to his feet and under his arms; and the blows are delivered two-handed by a couple of soldiers, who, standing one on either side of the sufferer, strike by turns exactly as we thrash corn in England: the officer, in the mean while, sits near, smoking, and, if he be a merciful man, counting the blows on his "sibha" (a sort of rosary used by the Mohammedans). In the many instances of this style of punishment that I have witnessed, I never remember having heard a man cry out lustily: frequently I have

heard them boast, "I am a two-horned ox! I am brother of the girls ten times!" and so on; but the greatest proof of suffering they ever seemed to utter was an occasional groan from a weakly man, or a few prayers for mercy, not loudly ejaculated, but spoken in nearly the natural tone of voice. I remember an instance of an old man who, with five others, was sentenced to 500 for evading the taxation by leaving his province. After the first twenty blows he once or twice repeated, "Mercy, oh Bey!" when a woman, who was standing by, coolly said, "What's the use of tiring your throat when you know you'll get nothing by it?" and from that moment he lay as still as if nothing were occurring. On account of his age and my intercession he got off with 180. None of the others, indeed, got their full quota, but received from three to four hundred: for my friend Moussa Bey, who ordered the punishment, is, for a Turk, a very kind man. They were, however, all carefully impressed with the notion that not one blow had been spared, and went away with the promise that next time they were convicted of a similar offence they should receive 1000 each.

One more anecdote, and I have done with floggings. There was a man in Khartoum suspected of having stolen some money in small gold coins from an Egyptian merchant. The evidence was strong enough to cast suspicion on him, but not sufficient to prove him guilty, so the usual Turkish method was employed—namely, of endeavouring to extort confession by the stick. The man was laid down, and received 200, without any further

effect than to call forth a repetition of his protestations of innocence; on this he was liberated, though every one believed him guilty. He left the court with such a self-satisfied look that the sergeant of the guard, who happened to be a friend or countryman of the man who had lost the money, could not restrain himself from venting his personal feelings against the supposed criminal in the shape of a sound box on the ear as he passed him. This one blow had more effect than the former 200, for it caused the missing coins to bear testimony themselves against the thief by jumping out of his cheek, where he had held them during the whole of his trial and punishment. Though I did not witness this fact myself, I can confidently vouch for the truth of it, as it was related to me by several persons almost immediately after it occurred. To make one part of it more credible to my European readers, I must explain that the gold coins alluded to, though as large as a half sovereign, are scarcely thicker than paper, being in value about two shillings of our money; also that the natives, being in the habit of carrying small articles in their mouths, especially tobacco, are expert in this monkey-like mode of concealment. The man evidently considered that he had made a good bargain in securing a few shillings at the expense of his 200 blows: for, had he confessed at the first stroke and restored the money, he would, in all probability, have received very few, if any, more blows than he did before the accidental discovery.

In different parts of the first volume I have related

many anecdotes from which may be gathered the facility with which wounds heal on persons whose blood is cool and whose systems are reduced to a sufficient degree of training by a life of hardship and privation; for instance, in the case of the splinter through my own foot, many medical men have assured me that, had I been fat with European good things instead of half starved, I should have certainly been confined to my bed for a length of time, with a possibility of locked jaw. But I allude to more serious wounds, as the horrible cases of the mutilation of Ato Wassan, the boy whose master attempted to murder him in the Barea war, and others of a similar nature. I can indeed name several who have suffered and recovered, as Abba Seyfo, once a soldier, now a Catholic priest; Shelika Tammerou, &c. &c. But the most striking instance of fortitude of which I ever heard, and at the same time similar as a cure to those just cited, occurred after an action below Armatchoho between a detachment of the Egyptian forces and some of an Abyssinian chieftain's. The details of the battle are unimportant here; suffice it to say, that, from some jealousy and much mismanagement of the Turkish leaders, their men were divided, and, being taken in confusion, completely routed by the Abyssinians. This is of course a termination which rarely occurs where troops entirely armed with firearms, and in some measure disciplined after the European fashion, have to do with an irregular force nearly all of whom carry nothing but lances and shields. The Abyssinians, elated with the victory, set about to slaughter and mutilate all whom

they could catch, a few only of the best mounted escaping, and a few great men being taken prisoners for the sake of their ransom. Two negro soldiers of the Egyptian regular infantry threw themselves down and feigned to be dead, hoping thereby to escape observation: some Abyssinians coming up to take their trophies, these men actually submitted to the fearful operation without flinching, or in any way allowing their sham to be detected, and, even after it was done, had the fortitude to remain perfectly still, until their enemies were gone, when, strange to relate, they were able to get up and crawl away, and ultimately effect their escape, though the field of battle was far from any place of safety. There is, I believe, not the slightest doubt of the truth of this story: both of the men recovered entirely, and one was living at Khartoum when I left that place; the other had died a short time before my arrival there, after having enjoyed perfect health for several years. Thus far what I have said has tended to show in some respects the enduring powers of the blacks, and thence some may conclude that they are of remarkably good constitutions. For my part, I am persuaded that a European, who began their system of life early and carried it through perfectly, would be as capable of endurance of any kind as a savage. From my own experience, I have reason to believe it to be the case, because when in such training I never found myself inferior to them at all in the endurance of fatigue or privation, and could always stand the heat of their country as well and often better than the natives themselves. Negroes, too, cannot bear

any change of climate or diet, while I am persuaded that a European, with proper precaution, might do well anywhere. In Egypt and the West Indies, both of which countries would appear better suited from climate for the negro than for the Englishman, the former suffers from the cholera, yellow fever, or other epidemic, far more than the latter; nor can this be said altogether to depend on the blacks being worse fed or lodged than the whites, for in the former country, in the year 1848, I knew of many instances where negroes and whites were living together in the same houses or boats, partaking of the same food, and wearing the same style of clothing. When I speak of Europeans being able to resist climate, &c., better than negroes, I must explain that I mean a fair sample of a stout healthy European—in fact, a perfect European.

As in our purses, so in our persons, we have in civilized countries a great inequality of size and strength; in England, for instance, you meet some of the biggest and strongest men in the world and some of the smallest and weakest; this disparity depends, no doubt, on the habits of the different persons and of their parents; some families are, from generations of temperance and activity, fine robust men; others, from the reverse of these, or from being by their trade confined within doors, sickly and delicate. The nearer you approach to the actual savage the less these differences of habits and occupation exist, and in proportion also the difference of size and strength. Among negroes, when you have obtained a correct average of the height or weight of a nation, you will find but

solitary instances of men who vary many inches or pounds above or below that average. On this account it would be unjust to make a parallel between an average negro and any but a fair specimen of a European.

In speaking of the diseases of Abyssinia, I would begin with the most prevalent. Tænia, or tape-worm, is, on this account, certainly the first to be considered, for the whole Abyssinian population may be said to be afflicted with it. Out of above forty persons, male and female, whom I had as servants at one time, only two were exempt, and I should say that this was a rather larger proportion than would be found in a general average of the people. The cause of this complaint has been frequently made a subject of speculation; by many it has been assigned to the eating of raw meat; by others again, to the great quantity of cayenne-pepper used by the Abyssinians. The first appears the most probable; but I have known many instances of persons—myself among the number—who had eaten raw meat in considerable quantities with impunity; while I have heard of others, even one or two Europeans, who had never touched it, and yet had suffered. Nearly two out of every three white men who have resided a few months in the country have had it, and yet few of these had eaten very largely of the supposed cause of it; hence I should say that, if the cause be not in the climate or the teff-bread, it must still remain a mystery. The natives are in the habit of taking physic regularly once every two months to relieve them of this malady, but as yet they have no means of completely

curing it, the head of the worm (as they say) remaining as a germ, from which link after link is formed, till a future dose is required. In this I believe European doctors are nowise superior to the natives, for they have lately introduced into the Pharmacopœia one of the Abyssinian medicines called kousso. This is the flower and seed of a tree which grows abundantly in some parts of the country. In Abyssinia a supply sufficient for a man's life may be procured for the value of 6*d.*, while in Europe a single dose, and that a very small one, costs several shillings. Besides this, the Abyssinians use the bark of another tree and the bulbous root of a small plant which, if it be not our common wood sorrel, is very nearly allied to it. One of these—I believe the bark—is reckoned much more efficacious than the "kousso," but is seldom used, from being supposed to be highly dangerous in its effects. The one is called "basinna," the other "muitcha-muitcho." Neither of these, however, is used when the kousso can be procured. The dried flowers are ground or pounded as fine as possible, and a strong infusion made, of which the patient takes more than half a pint fasting. About noon, when it has taken the required effect, a good quantity of beer or tedge is considered beneficial, on which account, if the sufferer be a servant, he begs for a supply from his master, or any friends who may be dining with him; coming round at meals, holding in his hand a small cross made of two bits of stick or straw, and exclaiming, "For the sake of Mary, for the sake of the Saviour," &c., when a horn

of liquor is usually given him. Mr. Salt (in Lord Valentia's Travels, vol. iii. p. 138) seems to have noticed this custom, but not to have understood the meaning of it. He says, in describing the "brinde" (broundo) feast, "There were also one or two men, with small crosses in their hands, which they held out, intimating thereby *that they were at that time obliged to fast.*"

Next is the complaint called "hannat," which is a glandular enlargement in the throat, ultimately forming abscesses, which increase to such a size that, if no means to cure them be taken, the throat is completely stopped up and the patient suffocated; this, after the tænia, is perhaps the most frequent malady of the Abyssinians. The premonitory symptoms are violent pains in the head, back, and legs, and much dizziness. The following remarks, taken from my original notes, will exemplify the treatment adopted for it:—"Tisphitou" (one of my servants), "on his return from Mai Quollaw, was seized with the 'hannat;' not having any of the preventive medicine, they twice took a good deal of blood from his head, but with no beneficial effect. The night before last he was obliged to be carried into the hut, being nearly senseless; the other servants urged him to have his throat examined, but he seemed reduced to that listless, apathetic state of mind in which we see people who are suffering from violent sea-sickness, for he begged to be left alone and not bothered; on being expostulated with, and the danger of delay pointed out to him, he merely said, 'Oh, never mind;

let me alone.' However, a soldier, who happened to be in the village, volunteering his services, and professing to be a skilful operator, we forced the patient's mouth open, and held him while the examination was going on. The throat was almost entirely closed, and, had the man been allowed to remain till the morrow, he would in all probability have died. The soldier, however, made short work with it; for, thrusting in his hand, he tore the swellings with his nail, and the patient, having ejected a quantity of matter and blood, was pronounced out of danger for the time. On the advice of the operator I gave him a good dose of jalap, and he ultimately recovered, though he remained in a very weak state for several days. Since his illness almost all of our people have suffered more or less from this same complaint. The preventive medicine which I alluded to is a sort of root, which is chewed in an early stage of the malady, and seems, when taken in time, to be a certain antidote. One symptom is extreme furriness of the tongue." The disease of which Mr. Salt (*vide* Valentia's Travels, vol. iii. p. 80) doubts the existence in Abyssinia is unfortunately only too prevalent; I myself have treated many cases of it, generally with much success where it was taken in time; but occasionally I have seen some most horrible instances where it has been neglected—living specimens, quite as fearful to behold as any of the models in the Musée d'Anatomie at Paris. That the Abyssinians appreciate the difference between it and the scorbutic affection with which Mr. Salt confounds it is evident from their having distinct names for

it. In Tigrè it is called "fintàta;" in Amhàric, "kitting;" and in the Galla language, "fànto." I have already mentioned that among the native remedies the flesh or blood of the wild boar is reckoned as one, probably, as I said, from their having seen the lard used by Europeans in the composition of mercurial ointment. They have several others, but none productive of good effect. Near Metemma, in the Nubian province of Berber, there is a sort of whitish-coloured earth, called by the natives "toureyba," which is used as a medicine in these cases, and I have been assured (even by some European medical men) with a good result: in Abyssinia they possess nothing so valuable. There is an old Armenian named Gorgorious (Gregory), who administers to sufferers, at a considerable charge, what he professes to be a certain cure. This is nothing more nor less than a dozen or two pills, containing corrosive sublimate, the recipe for which he, no doubt, obtained from some quack in Egypt. Though a rather dangerous medicine, this preparation of mercury might in many cases, if properly administered, be beneficial; but with our friend, who never troubles himself either to examine his patient, or inquire how long he has been afflicted, simply receiving his fee and desiring the sufferer to take so many per diem till the box is finished, it is a case of "kill," perhaps, oftener than of "cure." The natives, too, are very difficult to deal with, for they cannot be made to understand that, where one dose will do them good, two may be injurious; nor are the blacks worse in this respect than the Turks, Greeks, or Egyptians—

of which I have had many proofs. One I may relate, as having occurred in Abyssinia, though the person was an Albanian silversmith, named Michaël. I had been treating him for some time with calomel pills, one grain three times a day, and he was progressing very satisfactorily, but being obliged to leave Adoua I gave him a small stock, with particular instructions how he was to judge when it might be necessary to decrease the doses, &c. I left him in great good humour with my treatment, and promising to obey my instructions carefully. Calling upon him on my return after a few days absence, I was told by his servant that he was very bad indeed; and on going to him I found him in a most pitiable state of salivation and in a tremendous fright. By signs—for he could not speak—he confessed to having taken double doses, under the idea, no doubt, that he would recover in double-quick time. I gave him a good rating, frightened him a little, and then relieved him from his sufferings with a strong dose, which soon set him right again.

There is a sort of horrible scrofulous disease in all these countries, which causes the loss of the hands or feet. The people of Sennár call it "judàm;" I forget the Tigrè name. Elephantiasis is not so common in Abyssinia as in the low lands to the north, nor is the Guinea worm. I have never seen any case of the latter in this country, except in a pilgrim who was merely passing through. In the provinces of Sennár it is called "frantite," and its origin attributed to the black soil of the country; it sometimes appears

in the arms or body, but most commonly in the lower part of the leg. The only cure is to wind the worm gradually out, taking great care not to break it, which accident might be productive of very dangerous consequences.

Scabies is very prevalent, but I am doubtful if it is the same as that which is common with us. It generally fixes itself on the elbows, where it forms a large sore difficult enough to get rid of. It does not seem to depend at all on the habits of the person or on contagion, for I have known Europeans to have it without any assignable cause.

The various fevers of tropical climates are tolerably abundant in Abyssinia, though principally confined to the low marshy districts just after the cessation of the periodical rains. The natives seem to have but one name for any fever caught in the jungle ("nedad"), whether it be common intermittent ague or the fearful bilious jungle fever; while those of a low typhoid class, which occasionally visit even the most elevated towns, often as epidemics, are called "mitàt." Local bleedings, aperients, and emetics, are administered in these; for aperients they have certain herbs, but not an uncommon agent for producing both purgative and emetic effects is a large quantity of "ghee" (clarified butter) and honey. Dysentery, and the other complaints of the same family, are by no means uncommon. This is the disease which is most fatal to Europeans in these countries: several Frenchmen have died of it in Abyssinia. The natives chew a root, in addition to the

above-named medicines, for this class of malady. The root has a pungent taste, between ginger and pepper, and I really believe it did me some good on one occasion, when, not being able to have recourse to my own drugs, I was obliged to put up with those of the country. Small-pox is, I should say, not so common here as in many parts of the world: it has visited Abyssinia, as an epidemic, once or twice in the last fifteen years, but, judging by the number of those who bear its traces, I should say, not very severely.

Violent madmen are not often seen in Tigrè: I only saw one; he was a Mussulman of Adoua. A black "fàky" (or Mohammedan priest), who happened to be passing from the Felláta country on the west coast, on a pilgrimage to Mecca, undertook his cure: he caused the poor creature to be bound hand and foot with irons, and then alternately flogged him cruelly, and read portions of the Koran over him, several times a-day. As the scene of this treatment, the yard of the Musjid (or Mohammedan chapel), was separated from my court by only a low wall, I was grievously annoyed by the continued repetition of the stripes and yells which issued from it, and complained, but could obtain no redress, as it was a work of charity and piety.

The Abyssinians have a great dread of poison; they believe that many of their countrymen have considerable skill in its use. I never could discover what the supposed preparation was, that being, as I understood, a secret confined to few persons only. It was, however, described as a powder of light-brownish colour, with which

a man could be killed by a small quantity being sprinkled over a bundle of clothes and sent to him, or by its being thrown at him as he passed. An instance of the first case was related to me as having occurred shortly before my arrival in Abyssinia. Some one, wishing to kill Ato Wassan (governor of Adoua), having waited for the opportunity, went one day to where his clothes were being washed in the brook Assam. Entering into conversation with the servants about the quality of the different garments, he pretended to examine one which was already dried, and then took his departure. If I remember right, the servant who took the clothes home was seized, and became perfectly mad even before he reached the house; in consequence he threw them away, and so soiled them as to make it necessary to wash them a second time. Another man who collected them shared a similar fate, and, suspicion being directed to the clothes, they were destroyed. My story is very imperfect, for I have almost forgotten it; I cannot even say whether the servants recovered or not. I think Ato Wassan had had an anonymous warning on the subject the same day that it occurred. Search was made for the poisoner, but he was nowhere to be found, and no one of the men who saw him knew who he was, so that he was supposed to be a stranger employed by some great man who owed the chief a grudge.

I saw an instance of the poison being thrown on a person which did not at all tend to prove what I very much doubted—namely, that this mode of poisoning was

possible. A friend of mine, named Gabro Weldy, one day riding out in the market with his attendants, was suddenly taken ill and obliged to go home. A message was brought me, begging of me to take medicines and go at once, as he was poisoned and would surely die. He was chief of part of Adoua, but had a rival whom he had supplanted in the government, and in consequence lived in perpetual fear for his life. I obeyed the summons, and found my friend lying in his house surrounded by his friends. Naturally of a full, plethoric habit, his face was now unusually swollen; he foamed slightly at the mouth, and seemed rather dull, but sensible. I must say I was puzzled; it might be epilepsy, or the effects of a *coup de soleil*, and I didn't know what to do; so, unwilling to bear the responsibility altogether, I proposed giving him an emetic, but explained that, the nature of his complaint being new to me, I did not pretend to answer for the effects it might produce. His relations and he himself jumped at the notion (when ever did a nigger refuse to take tartar emetic or jalap?), and I gave him a pretty large dose of the former, which cured him, though why or wherefore I don't pretend to say. I tried to argue that poison could not have been the cause, asking them how a man could, in a crowded place, throw a powder over his victim without its chancing to affect either himself or any of the bystanders, but all to no purpose; poison it was, and I was a wonderful doctor.

The people of Walkait are said to be very skilful poisoners. I was cautioned against them before going

into their country, and consoled with the assurance that I should never leave it; "for," said the people of Tigrè, "if they like you, they will force you to stay among them by means of medicine or a charm; if they dislike you, you will die." I have spoken of local bleedings: these are of two sorts, one with, and one without, the aid of a cupping-horn. The mode of cupping is thus performed: the skin of the part is taken up between the thumb and fore-finger of the left hand, and a gash, half an inch long, cut in it with a razor; a small cow's horn, with the point cut off and perforated, is placed over the cut, and the operator sucks at the point, holding in his mouth a small piece of rag or chewed leather, which, with his tongue, he places over the orifice in the horn, either to exclude the air when he has to take breath, or to prevent the blood entering his mouth. The other plan of bleeding (without the horn) is often used for headaches, &c., where the blood is to be taken from the forehead. The patient places his hands one behind each ear; a tourniquet, made of a piece of rag, is then wound round his neck and wrists, and tightly compressed by means of a small stick; this, of course, causes the veins in the forehead to swell, when a razor is filliped across the eyebrow, precisely as we use a fleam, and the blood flows out in a stream to a distance of three or four feet. I thought to finish the chapter here, but talking of a fleam puts me in mind of a piece of Abyssinian farriery which rather amused me. My friend Dejatch Shétou, having lamed a favourite horse by a strain which he got

while playing at "goux," left him for some time in my town house, hoping that with rest he would recover. On his return, the horse being no better, he sought out a skilful man, who undertook to cure the strain. He had the horse brought out, and strong cords tied, one so as to bring his hind feet together, and the other the fore feet; the end of the hind rope was then passed between the fore legs, and that of the fore rope between the hind legs, and men pulling simultaneously at each, all four feet were, after some difficulty, dragged together, and the poor animal thrown very roughly on his side; the feet were then securely tied, and a stout wooden bar placed through them, by which, several men putting their shoulders to it, the horse was slung feet uppermost, and then kicked in the ribs by the veterinary to make him struggle. The process was repeated several times, and I heard them say that he was much better before I left the country.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

NATURAL HISTORY.

ZOOLOGY would, perhaps, have been a more correct title for this chapter, as it will contain very little of any other branch of natural history; but anything ending in "ology" has too scientific a sound for my unpretending pen.

Though much has already been done by travellers in this branch of science—especially I might name Messrs. Rüppell and Schimper—still Abyssinia offers a wide field of research for the naturalist. Its mineralogical wealth is as yet only a matter of speculation, its botany but imperfectly known, and there are hundreds of interesting objects in zoology which, though many of them are known to the traveller by their native names and reputations, have hitherto kept themselves out of the way of collectors. Of the class of large game I have met with or heard of a great many of the varieties found at the Cape of Good Hope and the interior of Southern Africa; though, from the country being much more thickly inhabited and the people in a more advanced degree of civilization, they are not to be met with in the same abundance as they are in those more

desert regions. The mountainous, rocky nature of Abyssinia is unfavourable to the sportsman, for the larger animals confine themselves almost altogether to the valleys and low plains. The lion is not common in most parts of the country, though pretty often to be met with on the March, Taccazy, and other rivers, and on the plains to the north, by Walkait, the Barea country, Bidéles, and Ailat. The natives of these parts do not hold him in such dread as one would be led to believe by the accounts of some travellers. I have heard, more than once, of shepherds, armed only with sticks and stones, driving away lions which had entered their flock. They have an idea here that, if attacked with metal weapons, such as spears, swords, or guns, the lion will turn on his assailants: but that he will invariably take himself off unresistingly if sticks and stones only be employed against him. The hunters assert that in his attack the lion walks or creeps up to his intended victim till within the distance that he can cover with three bounds, and that, should his third spring be eluded, he will probably pass on, and not attempt a second attack: this theory is, I believe, very little to be relied on. They say, also, that when on the defensive, if a man be the aggressor, the lion will retire twice; but, if the hunter still persists in advancing, he will not spare him a third time. As regards the evil that lions do in the way of carrying off people, &c., though such cases do occasionally occur, they are very rare. Somehow or other, European travellers generally manage to get attacked much oftener

than any one else—at least, so it was remarked to me by a reverend missionary, who said that he had seen more attacks by lions recorded in books of travel than he had ever heard of having occurred to the whole native population in the same space of time. Among Eastern and African nations one always hears of the wonderful doings of some other nations a long way off; stories of this sort, if pursued, would lead the traveller, like a will-o'-the-wisp, into the uttermost and innermost parts of the land; for when he arrives at the spot where, as was first related to him, the wonder happened, he will, on inquiry, be told that, though doubtless the story was true, yet the scene of its occurrence was not there, but some ten days' journey further off, and so on.

In Abyssinia, for instance, they tell how, among the Gallas, there are certain tribes, among whom the boys go out to slay the lion single-handed, and armed only with a small knife and a piece of stick a foot long: the stick being used literally *to stop the lion's jaw.* The boy provokes the kingly animal by insulting epithets, till he springs open mouthed at him, when, with great dexterity, the youthful hunter thrusts his pointed stick perpendicularly between the lion's jaws, which, closing on it, are thereby rendered innocuous, after which the boy proceeds deliberately to cut his throat with his knife. Fancy a boy holding a lion with one hand and cutting his throat with the other! Cœur de Lion could not have done it. I have often asked how it happened that the sportsman forgot bags for his claws—weapons far more

dangerous, and more often used by all the feline tribe, than their teeth. Strange to say, old hunters have told me this story and believed it; and others, seated by, have heard it and never raised a doubt as to its veracity. I have asked Gallas if there were any custom in their mode of lion-hunting to give foundation to such a romance; and have heard from more than one, that, though this practice did not occur among them, it did among the Somauli tribes. Similarly, why should I not tell of the Beni Kelb (sons of the dog), whose males are dogs, and females beautiful women; or of the Beni Temsah (sons of the crocodile), who have human bodies, but heads like those of their ancestor's family. Surely, if caught, they would be considered very great "lions" in their way. I have heard of the former of these nations in almost every country that I have visited in Africa, from Egypt to the White Nile, including Kordofan and Abyssinia, and even in Arabia, whither their fame has been carried, doubtless, by pilgrims. They are, by most, believed to exist near the Fertit country (south of Darfour), where there are copper-mines, and the people of which file their teeth to points, saw fashion. They are said (that is the sons of the dog) to be as hospitable as the sons of Adam, or more so; strangers are well received and entertained by the women, while the dogs go out, bring game, fawn on them, and offer them all sorts of canine welcome. But of one thing the traveller must be cautious—the Beni Kelb are jealous dogs, and their feelings on this point must in no way be trifled with, or the rash traveller will stand considerable

chance of being literally made "dog's-meat" of. I have questioned many Fertit slaves, and they believe fully in the existence of this race, but place their whereabouts at nine or ten days' journey to the south-west of their country. Of the Beni Temsah I have heard little, but should be sorry to visit their territory (which is said to lie somewhere in the interior), lest I should meet with a crocodile embrace and a crocodile lamentation for my fate. The saying, by the way, of "crocodile's tears" is nearly as common among the Arabs of the White Nile as with us, at least the origin of it; for they positively assert that the beast, having drowned its victim, tucks him under its arm, and carries him off to some lonely sandbank, where, previous to eating him, it sheds many tears of sorrow.

Though the digression from one sort of lion to the other may be somewhat unpardonable, yet I think that, having committed the fault, I may just as well go on with it. There is no tribe in this part of Africa, indeed scarcely an individual, but believes in the existence of a race of men with tails. For my own part, I have heard so much of them that I can scarcely help fancying that there must be some sort of foundation for such very general belief. Some of the Abyssinians have declared that, among the people whom we have called Barea, or Bàza, there is a tribe or district called Jiràtan, the people of which have tails, and are cannibals; they are said to lie somewhere north of the Barea; but here again the wonder-hunter would be nonplussed, for the people of Tàka and that neighbourhood

(which would be in the direction indicated)—though all believe in the existence of such a race under another name—some declare that they are south of the Bàza, or near to Abyssinia, and others that they are in the centre of Africa. This latter locality appears, indeed, to be the receptacle of all these *lusi naturæ*. A man whom I met in Abyssinia amused me much with some of his ideas on these subjects: he was one of the handsomest blacks I ever saw, and had just arrived from Kordofan, on his way to the Galla tribes, as he said, but, in truth, I fancy on a voyage of speculation anywhere. He was a clever, imaginative fellow, and considered himself a learned man, being a "fàky," or priest. As is often the case, however, talent without much judgment and experience, and aided by no education whatever, had led to superstition and credulity, and this good man was the most credulous fellow I ever met. Our first conversation showed me this, for, after some circumlocution, he led it on to the subject of alchemy, a topic little discussed among these southern nations, but believed in by the Turks and other Easterns, under the name of "chimia." He had, he said, much knowledge in the art of making gold and silver, and, persuaded that I must have many secrets, tried hard to induce me to go and settle with him, in order that by combining our knowledge we might ensure our fortunes. I begged him to believe that I was only a soldier, and knew nothing of such matters; but I could see that the poor fellow was bitterly disappointed, persuaded that I had some valuable secrets which I was unwilling to reveal. I said that

such things were disbelieved in India and Europe, where he had an idea that they were fully understood and practised, and I told him that if he went there he would be able to satisfy himself that such was the case. To this he replied that he should like to visit those countries (he believed them to be close together), but that he had heard how they treated strangers there. I asked him "How?" "Why," said he, "they hang them up by the legs, and then flog them with whips, and the sweat which falls from them under this treatment, being collected and cooled, becomes corrosive sublimate!!"

I endeavoured to find out something from him concerning my future route across Africa. He said that, having crossed Kordofan, I could enter Darfour safely, but that I should be stopped at Dar Saley, the next country, it being at war with Darfour; that I might possibly pass by the south, through the slave tribes, but with difficulty, many of them being cannibals, among whom white meat was not only a novelty, but also was considered to have a fat, delicate look, which was very tempting. He told me that a brown man, a Mohammedan priest, who went there from his country, in the hope of converting the people to Islamism—though protected from actual danger by his sanctity—was, nevertheless, a very tempting object among them; so much so, that whenever he went out the little children came about him, poking him with their fingers in the ribs, feeling his arms and legs, and muttering to one another, "Wa-wa, wa-wa!" (meat,

meat), with their mouths watering, and their features expressive of the greatest possible inclination to taste him.

To return to four-footed lions. I have nothing more to say about them, but that the killing one of them ranks as equal to killing twenty men in this country. Leopards (or panthers?) are frequently to be met with in all parts of Abyssinia; they are called nebry in the Tigrè language. The natives occasionally snare them in a rather artful manner. A rope with a running noose is tied to the bough of a tree, which is by main force drawn down towards the ground; the rope is then fixed, by a contrivance so arranged that when the leopard attempts to seize the bait (usually a lamb) he is caught in the noose by the neck, and when he moves, setting the rope free at the ground, the bough springs up into its original position, and hangs him. I shot one leopard just after leaving Tigrè, and altogether collected fourteen beautiful skins, some of very large size, but these were all destroyed with the unfortunate collection I sent to Aden. The black leopard is found mostly in the Galla countries; his skin is worn by great chiefs in battle, being rare, expensive, and very beautiful. It is of the deepest chocolate brown, with the spots of a darker colour, almost black. The ordinary leopard's is (as I have before said) worn only by the Zacchári. There is an animal, which I know not where to class, as no European has hitherto succeeded in obtaining a specimen of it; it is supposed by the natives to be far more active, powerful, and dangerous than even the lion, and consequently held by them in the greatest possible

dread. They call it "wobbo" or "mantillit," and some hold it in superstitious awe, looking upon it more in the light of an evil spirit with an animal's form than as a wild beast. Their descriptions of this animal are vague in the extreme: some say that its skin is partly that of a lion, but intermixed with that of the leopard and hyæna; others, again, assert that its face is human, or very like it. It appears in the valleys, happily, only rarely; for they say that when it takes its abode near a village, it pays nightly visits, entering the very houses, and carrying off the children, and even occasionally grown-up persons. One had been killed some years ago on the river Werrey, and its skin presented to Oubi; but I could never discover what became of it. I heard of a village which had suffered considerably from its depredations, and for several days watched every night in the neighbourhood, but without any success.

The "nebry guolguol" is a pretty little animal, rather larger than a wild cat, and marked like a leopard, only that its spots are plain dark blotches, and not annular rosettes. There are two or three sorts of wild cats, which attain to a considerable size (they are mostly of a greyish colour), and one or two varieties of lynxes. The civet cat is, I should fancy, a native of this country, though rare, for I have never met with it, or even heard of it, wild; but the neighbouring Galla tribes keep it for the sake of the musk (or civet), a large quantity of which passes annually on its way to the coast, and ultimately to Arabia, Egypt, and India. The scent is merely a secretion, which exudes at

certain periods from between the legs of the animal; it is scraped off and preserved, and fetches a high price at Massàwa, a drinking-horn full costing from thirty to forty dollars. The merchants sometimes endeavour to smuggle in small quantities of this precious article, but seldom succeed, its powerful odour generally telling tales, even if the horn which contains it be concealed in a large cake of wax. I was surprised, when in Cairo, at finding it sold at even a less price than at Massówa; but on investigation discovered that none leaves Jidda till it has doubled its bulk by adulteration with oil and other ingredients. There are several varieties of the canine species. First, as being the largest, is the misshapen, disgusting, "laughing hyæna," called in Tigrè "zibby,"—in Amhàric, "jib;" he is to be found almost everywhere in the country, but, from his scavenger habits, chiefly in the most thickly peopled districts. He prowls about the streets of the villages, howling, laughing, and quarrelling with the dogs, with whom he disputes possession of the offal, and even enters the yards and houses in quest of anything eatable, nor is he (if hungry) very choice in his selection of a supper: he will steal leathern bags and pieces of skins, such as are used for wearing or sleeping on; I have frequently been disturbed by them in this manner, and it once occurred to me, as it has often to people whom I have known, to be awakened by one of them endeavouring to steal my leathern bed from under me. Luckily, they are as cowardly as they are big, strong, and ugly, for, had they only the pluck of a toy-terrier, there would be no living

in a country so full of them. Nevertheless, they are said to attack children and weakly persons. They are supposed to be able to detect a faint and wearied wayfarer by the smell of his footsteps, and to follow him till, overcome by fatigue, he shall fall an easy prey, or till sleep shall give them an opportunity. They have even been known to attack persons asleep in their own houses. A living evidence of this is to be seen in the person of a young Mohammedan, now residing at Adoua, who was robbed one night of the scalp of one side of his head. The Abyssinians relate that in such cases (which are comparatively rare) the hyæna shows quite as much prudence as valour, for they assert positively that before attacking a healthy sleeper he will scratch him with his paw; if the man sleep heavily (as is often the case in this country, to an almost wonderful degree), the beast will make one grab with his powerful jaws at his face or head, and be off; whereas, if disturbed by the scratching, the sleeper should start up, he will turn tail at once, leaving behind most disagreeable evidences of a highly nervous temperament. He is dangerous among domestic animals, and frequently attacks donkeys or mules. Once I was sleeping on the White Nile; we were a large party, and for fear of lions, &c., had tethered our animals in an open space, while we ourselves slept in a circle all round them with fires lighted. In the middle of the night we were disturbed by a great "kick up," and, on rubbing our eyes, made the discovery that a hyæna had had the impudence to come into the midst of us, seize my favourite donkey by the

rump. and drag him almost out of the circle of the camp. It would appear that he had bitten harder than he meant, for he had torn out a piece of flesh as big as a man's fist.

Once, however, in Abyssinia, a case of "catching a Tartar," or "the biter bit," occurred between a hyæna and a donkey; for the latter with his teeth seized his aggressor by the neck, and, aided by terror, held him fast till he died. Next morning, when his master came, he found him shivering with fear, but still holding on to the hyæna's corpse; nor could his mouth be opened till they got a bar, and forced his jaws asunder. I was told this story by the son of the donkey's master; he positively assured me of the truth of the story, and moreover declared that from that time forth the donkey, which had formerly been much given to roaming, was perfectly cured of his erratic habits, nor could he be induced to pass the night even outside of the house.

Of the "tokla" (*canis venaticus?*) there are two sorts in Abyssinia. One is of a light tan colour, and tall and slight, almost like a small greyhound; at least so it has been described to me. Of the other kind, which is shorter and stouter built, I kept a tame specimen for some time; at least, as nearly domesticated as it seemed his nature was capable of, for at all times he was a wild, shy brute, and usually managed to inflict a deepish wound on the fingers of any imprudent stranger who ventured to caress him. Nevertheless, he was very cunning, and knew me well; would submit with a tolerably good grace when I patted him, and would

come to my call: he was about ten months or a year old when I first got him. In appearance Tokla was more curious than beautiful; he had a little lean body, which no feeding could fatten, covered with a darkish brindly-spotted coat not unlike a hyæna's, and supported by legs as unlike those of any other animal as possible, being in colour white, with dark leopard spots, the hind legs remarkably long, and so doubled under him that when walking, or rather prowling about, it was doubtful if he touched the ground oftenest with his feet or *elbows*. His head was dark coloured, short, and very broad and square about the muzzle, with small protruding black eyes, which seemed never to rest, a long forehead, and the whole finished off with a pair of ears equal in length and broader than those of the finest hare that was ever coursed. These somewhat awkward appendages he always kept flat on his back when excited either by fear or anger, seeming to use them only as substitutes for his eyes when these were closed in sleep. To complete his description, he had a tricoloured tail, which was set on just like a hyæna's, hanging down loosely behind him, dark at the stump, then white, and the tip grey. To account for his perpetual thinness, it only requires to state his mode of feeding. He would take a huge piece of meat or offal, and put it into his stomach at once, seemingly entire, for he never appeared aware that his wonderfully muscular jaws and double row of teeth were at all available for mastication. Having thus bolted his dinner, his belly became distended till it nearly touched the ground,

and then he would go and lie down for twenty-four hours or more, according to the quantity he had eaten; after which he would return to be fed, as empty and starved-looking as ever. The Abyssinians say that these animals hunt in packs, and, though comparatively slow in their pace, succeed in bringing down their prey by perseveringly following its track for days and days. They even assert that neither the elephant nor buffalo is safe from their attacks; that if they find one asleep they fall upon him in numbers, and seize fast hold on the tenderest parts of his belly: the animal, thus disagreeably roused from his slumbers, starts up and lashes about with the pain and fury. But nothing can dislodge his little persecutors, who hold on like leeches, till the victim, having worn himself out with passion and exertion, sinks exhausted. The former of these statements is, I doubt not, correct; the latter probably founded on fact. I tried several experiments with Tokla in these matters, and from them formed my opinion. Once I remember being attracted into the yard by a bustling noise as of animals running about, intermixed with my pet's shrill, squeaking voice. On going out nothing was apparent but a sheep lately bought for dinner, which, however, was running about with every appearance of nervousness. Where was Tokla, whose voice I had just heard uttering notes of unusual excitement? Lying quietly rolled up in a corner, shamming sleep, but peeping at me from the corner of one of his little wicked black eyes. I said nothing, but conccaled myself in a shed, through the

branches that formed the sides of which I could observe all that passed. For a short time the little brute lay motionless, in the same position as I had left him; after a while, however, he got up stealthily, stretching himself as if just awake, but at the same time taking a furtive glance to see that all was quiet. Having satisfied himself on this point, he made a rush at the poor sheep, with his ears back and squeaking horribly. The sheep ran away when it could, only standing and butting at its little opponent when driven into a corner, and evidently in a desperate fright. Tokla seemed to heed little whether heels or horns met his advances, but kept on, now rushing furiously in, now dodging for a more favourable opening, incessantly for nearly half an hour. I doubt not, though scarcely six pounds weight, he would have ended by "*walking into the mutton*" of his adversary, had I not felt compassion for the poor sheep's mental sufferings, and disturbed my little friend in his pursuit. Indeed, I could not have allowed him to indulge his sporting propensities so long as he did, excepting as a study of his natural ideas, manners, and customs. The sheep, be it remembered, was not a fat unwieldy Leicester, but a great, bony, active brute, more like an exaggerated forester. In regard to this animal's powers of tenacity, a friend of mine, knowing that I was fond of pets, once brought me a young jackal, which he had knocked over with a stick or stone, the animal being at the time surfeited with an enormous dinner of locusts that he had just eaten. From the helpless appearance he presented, I feared he was

much hurt, and made him a comfortable bed of cotton wool in a corner, placing food and water by him. He remained all that day where he was, apparently in great suffering, and continued so for some time; but to my astonishment, rising early one morning, I found that he and Tokla had entered into an alliance most offensive to the fowls, one of which they had caught, and were dragging about the yard—the one holding by a foot, the other by a wing. The moment I appeared, Coberò (the jackal) let go the fowl and limped back to his corner, a return of his sufferings having, it would appear, come on. Tokla, more determined, I had to beat off, which I did with great difficulty, and not until the poor fowl was so lacerated that I was constrained to kill it. Excited by its death struggles, he again laid hold, and this time I determined to see how long he would do so; so I held up the fowl with him dangling to its wing till I was tired, and then swung him round and round, over and over, in hopes of his jaws tiring. But in this I was disappointed, for he held on till the wing breaking off threw him heavily on to his back to a distance of several yards. Even in his fall he was great, for he neither uttered a sound of pain, nor loosened his hold, but getting up stalked away quite proudly with the wing in his mouth. I was so much pleased with him that I gave him the body and all; in this, perhaps, I acted wrong, for we afterwards found that if we didn't kill all the poultry he would, and so I gave up ever keeping any more. Poor little Tokla! I grew very fond of him, for, though rough and ugly, he had such pretty,

winning ways—he seemed always hungry, and would often bite people's legs, occasionally my own, not at all from vice, but sheer appetite.

There are three or four sorts of jackals in Abyssinia. The common grey one is found everywhere; another is larger and of a bright chesnut and grey colour, while that of Simyen is yellow. Last of the canine species are three varieties of domestic dogs: one of these, the smallest, is not unlike the common town dogs all over the East, both in appearance and habits, though the dogs here, for the most part, have a sort of claim on some master; the next is larger and well-built, something resembling a very powerful greyhound or deerhound; this sort is not common, and is much esteemed. They are easily taught to hunt, and are frequently employed in catching grouse as well as four-footed game. M. d'Abbadie, on his return to Europe, brought one with him, which (if I remember right) he told me was a match for a wild boar. I could easily believe it, for I never saw a more powerful, active-looking dog in my life. The third sort, if it be a distinct variety, I never heard of but in one family in Tigrè; it is as big as a mastiff, and very strong, though clumsily built. I had one given me, but he died at Khartoum a year after I left Abyssinia; he will be mentioned hereafter under the name of Maychal Bogo. The dog "couchant" in the sketch of my house at Àdoua was intended as his portrait, while the one standing represented "Elfin," a little greyhound bitch, half English half Arab, and bred by Dr. Abbott, of Cairo.

Elephants and buffaloes are to be found, at certain seasons, in the valleys of the Mareb, Taccazy, and other rivers, and in the adjoining plains; they ascend and descend the streams according to the supply of grass and water. Both of these animals are so well known as to need little description of their habits. The Abyssinians, some centuries ago, are said to have used the elephant for riding and carrying loads, as now in India: this custom is, however, entirely abandoned. The buffalo is more dangerous than the elephant, which seldom attacks a man unprovoked, unless it be a single male separated from the herd; while travellers who have had the ill luck to stumble on a herd of buffaloes have seldom escaped to tell the story. While I was at Rohabaita, two men, crossing the Mareb, came upon a herd; they were charged immediately; one, by good luck, got away among some bushes and ultimately escaped, and brought us news that his comrade was killed. We set off in search of the body, which we, with some difficulty, found in the jungle, bruised and broken to an almost undistinguishable mass by the horns and hoofs of the buffaloes.

The giraffe and rhinoceros are not common in Tigrè, though occasionally found in the plains to the northward. The skin of the former is used by the Arabs for shields, but I am not aware of any purpose to which it is applied in Abyssinia—probably on account of its rarity. I have seen it stated (I believe by Bruce) that the hair of its tail is used for whips to drive away flies. This is quite true in Darfour and Kordofan, and may have

been so formerly in Abyssinia; but now in Tigrè, from the scarcity of the giraffe, horse-hair is more in vogue. The priests and gentlemen almost always carry a whip of this kind, mostly made of white horse-hair stained red with henna. I have mentioned that the horns of the rhinoceros are used for sword-hilts.

The hippopotamus is found in the Taccazy, but I believe nowhere else in Tigrè. The lake Tzana and other waters of the Amhàra country are plentifully stocked with this animal; there is a tribe called "Commaunt" that subsists entirely on fish and the flesh of the hippopotamus; the hide is used for making whips. The Abyssinians make their "harlingas" with a hippopotamus-hide stock, and a plain shred of leather for a thong; while the "sote" or courbatch of the White Nile and Sennár is a single piece of the solid skin, cut round and tapering to a point, so as to resemble our ordinary straight riding-whips.

There are two varieties of Cynocephali, or dog-faced baboons; a small greenish-grey monkey, with a black face and white whiskers; and the "goreyza." This last is, I should think, one of the most beautiful of the monkey tribe; its back and head are covered with short, jet-black, glossy fur, while its sides and cheeks are furnished with silky hair of the purest white; its tail is very long, and with a bush of white hair at the end; this and the hair of the sides is several inches in length. The goreyza is to be found in some parts of Tsajaddy and Walkait, not (properly speaking) in Tigrè. I obtained several specimens, many very fine

ones, which, however, were ruined at Aden. They frequent the high trees about churches, and on this account the people made some difficulty about their being killed; they are very active, and, when springing from bough to bough, the silvery fringe of their sides flapping out gives them almost the appearance of being winged.

There are many varieties of antelopes: the largest is the "agazin" (koodoo ?); it is nearly the size of a small cow, of a dun colour, with narrow white stripes down the sides, and long spiral horns; "tora" (hartebeeste ?), "waddemby" (gnu), "bohor," "callbadou," "medauqua" or "meyda," "sassha," "anshon," and several others. The "sassha" is found almost entirely on the rocky mountains; it is of the size of a goat, with straight horns about four inches long, and its hair is of a greyish colour and resembles the quills of a hedgehog in stiffness. I am not sure whether "anshou" is the *Tigrè* name for the little gazelle which I have, in the first part of the work, called by its Arabic name of "ghannam Ben' Israël."

I found two kinds of hares; they are lighter coloured and smaller than the English one, and their ears are broader and longer; in appearance they partake so much of the hare and rabbit that I should be at a loss to decide which of the two they really were. The cony, "ashkoko," abounds in the rocks of the northern "quollas." The porcupine, hedgehog, a sort of squirrel, the ichneumon, and most of the other varieties of the rat tribe usual in these latitudes, are to be met with.

There is an animal called "saheyra," which I could not obtain, of which the Abyssinians have some curious ideas; it lives in holes in the ground, and is said to feed on dead bodies, &c., coming out only at night. From one part of the description, that its hide is impenetrable to lance or bullet, I should judge it to be of the armadillo species.

The birds of these countries, though inferior in brilliancy of plumage to those of South America or Australia, and perhaps in song to our European warblers, are, nevertheless, probably as interesting as any to the ornithologist, from being in great variety, of striking character, and less known than those of the other quarters of the world. I collected above three hundred varieties, a good proportion of which I succeeded in bringing home with me. The ostrich and bustard are found to the north of Abyssinia and in the wilder districts of that country. I have four varieties of vulture; the largest measures nearly eleven feet from tip to tip of his extended wings; he is brown, except his thighs and the under feathers of his breast, which are white; his neck and head are naked, except a sort of bristly beard under his chin. Another smaller sort has a white tuft on the head and neck. The others are the "secretary," "farras seytan," and the "rakhamah," or white Egyptian vulture.

The eagles are very beautiful; one, the largest, is all jet black, with the exception of his back, which is pure white; another is rufous, or reddish brown, excepting his head, neck, and tail, which are white, and the upper

feathers of his wings, which are of a dark chocolate-brown, almost black; a third, smaller one, is all black, with a crest of feathers on his head. I have, in all, ten or twelve sorts of eagles. There are about twenty-four sorts of hawks and falcons, many of them very interesting; four owls, a great-horned, lesser ditto, one resembling the common screech-owl, and a very small one, not larger than a small thrush. In my collection are a great number of storks, herons, ibises, cranes, and others of the grallatorial order, among which I might mention the *Balæniceps rex*, or king stork, an entirely new species, of which I have the only pair hitherto known in Europe; the royal crane (or crested), purple heron, sacred ibis, &c. &c. I have several kinds of plovers, six of grouse and partridge, the guinea-fowl, and florican; two very handsome geese, and five sorts of ducks. Of the hornbills I have already described the abba goumba; there are besides three other sorts, and the common hoopoe. There are ten or eleven sorts of cuckoo, one of which, the emerald cuckoo, though nearly the smallest, may be reckoned the most beautiful bird in this part of Africa, from the brilliant green of its back, contrasted with the bright canary yellow of its breast. The parrots and parroquets are few; I have only one sort of long-tailed green parroquet, a small grey, yellow, and green parrot, and the love-birds. I found three or four varieties of the night-jar, and as many of the woodpeckers, bee-eaters, fly-catchers, swallows, &c. &c. There is a great variety of pigeons and doves in Abyssinia and the neighbouring countries; of

Female Abba Goumba.

these the yellow-breasted pigeon is the most remarkable in plumage. The thrushes, sunbirds, kingfishers, rollers, and touracos are the most brilliantly coloured families of any. There are a great many sorts of thrushes; seven or eight sunbirds, which are the African species most resembling the humming-bird of South America; and six kingfishers, including the Great African. Besides these are a number of shrikes, barbets, finches, larks, &c. &c. I had forgotten the crow tribe, of which I have four sorts—one a large raven, with an enormously thick bill, and a white patch on his head, and another, a small bird, not much larger than a blackbird, with a long tail. Thus I have given a rough sketch of my collection;* my unscientific readers will care for no more; while to those who may be curious on the subject I can only say that I shall be happy either to show them the specimens or to afford them any information in my power.

Reptiles of all sorts abound in the low, hot districts of Tigrè. The crocodile is plentiful in every brook or hole where there is water enough to conceal him. There are several varieties of the "iguano" or large lizard. The Abyssinians will eat the flesh of neither of these, though the Arabs everywhere eat the lizard, and

* I should perhaps state that my collection was not made exclusively in Tigrè, part of it being from the countries of Sennár and the White Nile, which lie in nearly the same latitude, though west of Abyssinia. With the exception of the Balæniceps rex and a few others I found scarcely any difference in the birds of the two countries. I saw lately a collection brought from south-western Africa by my friend Mr. Galton, and was surprised at the fewness of the specimens which were new to me.

those on the White Nile do not by any means despise crocodile's flesh; I have tasted both, that of the former frequently; it is anything but disagreeable. Of the smaller lizards there are an innumerable quantity in all those countries; one sort, called by the Sennáris "dhabb," is much feared by both them and the people of Tigrè: they fancy that the poor little beast has the power of spitting some sort of venom which is very dangerous, and that it poisons any food, especially milk, which it may taste. I believe that all this is perfect slander, for, except that its appearance is unprepossessing, being covered with scales and other excrescences, I never saw anything in the poor "dhabb" but what caused me to become a great friend to him, and save him from much persecution whenever I was able. On one occasion the fear the Abyssinians have of him served to fill my hungry stomach better than I should otherwise have done. It happened that once, being on very short commons, I was seated at dinner next to a man who had a truly Abyssinian appetite and a still more Abyssinian facility for quickly despatching his food. Feeling that I should come in for a very small proportion of my share, I had recourse to a little stratagem to check his mastication. We had been talking of the "dhabb" (I forget his Tigrè name), and in the course of the conversation it was said, that, if he spat on a person, the poison was so powerful that the victim would feel ill at once, and die in twenty-four hours. This fiction was agreed to by several present, who, of course, all fancied that they had heard the same.

After a few minutes I gave a start, and threw my club into a corner near us. "What's the matter?" I was asked.—"Oh! nothing but an ugly little lizard, but he got away." Next, with a bit of grass, which I wetted in my mouth, I now and then touched the bare shoulders and back of my neighbour, who at the first time started, at the second looked round uncomfortably, and at the third time cursed the "dhabb's" family, lost his appetite, and declared he felt very ill. So I got my share, and more, and consoled my neighbour afterwards with explaining the joke; whereat he got very angry, and well laughed at by the rest of the party, one or two of whom had seen through the whole trick from the first, and assisted in playing it. There are many snakes, centipedes, and large venomous spiders of the tarantula kind in the hot, low districts. Among others, a species of boa constrictor is not uncommon. I have mentioned that one, reported of very large dimensions, was killed at Rohabaita some time before I went there. I myself saw two in the gully where the village wells are, and had a nearer view of them than was perhaps altogether safe. The grass and jungle being too high for much shooting, I went down one day to practise my rifle at a mark, and accordingly, having selected a part of the dry watercourse which, running nearly straight for above one hundred and fifty yards, appeared suitable for my purpose, I left one of the two servants who had accompanied me with my gun, while I and the other paced off the distance, and made a rough target of stones. Arrived at the proper place,

we were engaged in collecting materials for our construction from the sides of the watercourse (which, as I have before said, was only a few feet wide, and with hills covered with rock and jungle rising abruptly from it on either side), when Tisphitou, the servant who was with me, started back, and pulled me with him, calling out "Temen, temen!" (snake). At the same moment I heard a loud rustling in the jungle, close to where we had been getting stones, and thinking, in my ignorance of the language (I had but just arrived at Rohabaita), that "temen" might mean lion, leopard, or antelope, called loudly to Gabrou to come up with the gun. All this passed in a moment's time; and although only one hundred and fifty yards off, long before the gun arrived I had seen two magnificent boa constrictors, one about ten yards from the other, quietly leave their places, without attempting to molest us, and ascend the hill, till they were lost in jungle, whither I never cared to pursue them. The first thing I saw after the rustle was a head, which appeared for a moment above the canes, then a body, nearly as thick as my thigh, and then they disappeared, the movement of the canes only marking the direction they had taken.

There is a great variety in the smaller sorts of snakes: the cerastes, or horned viper, asp, a species of cobra, the puff adder, and many others of all sizes and colours, from a pale pink to the brightest emerald green, are met with in Abyssinia and the adjacent countries. I was told of a horned serpent that was killed some years ago, which appears to have been a monstrosity,

either in reality or the imagination of my informants. They described it as about seven feet long, nearly two feet in circumference, with scarcely any diminution towards the tail, and wearing a pair of horns three inches in length. It is commonly reported that dragons, or rather flying lizards of very venomous nature, are to be met with in Walkait. Scorpions are abundant everywhere in the hot districts; no house but is full of them. I have been stung several times by them, but without any serious consequences, though I have heard of many instances which have ended fatally.

As for fish and insects, there are plenty of the former in most of the rivers, and too many of the latter everywhere, but I know very little about them.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

JOURNEY TO THE TACCAZY.

IT would be very discourteous in me to leave my readers in such an out-of-the-way place as Àdoua, else I might here bring my narrative to a close, for what remains will merely serve to show them the way into a rather more civilized district. Before entering upon the details of the long and very rough journey before us, I will just say a few words on what has already passed.

It must not be imagined that I was a fixture in the capital from the time of my return from Addy Abo till my final departure, although for convenience sake I may have allowed this to appear to have been the case. I made excursions into various of the provinces, and paid several visits of more or less duration to my old country friends as soon as the conclusion of the rains permitted me to move about. But I am not going to bore either myself or the reader with a journal of these excursions: I could at the best only tell of a few more quarrels with the inhabitants of the various villages I may have passed, or a few more kindnesses from them; of plenty here, and starvation there, &c. &c. As for the mode in which I spent my time in Àdoua, it will be

gleaned, from the notes on the manners and customs, that I was leading the life of an Abyssinian gentleman "about town," my hair well tressed, my pantaloons always of the newest, frequently of an original, cut; in dull weather setting fashions, disputing and deciding on the merits and demerits of shields and spears; in fine weather swelling about the town with a quarter of a pound of butter melting on my head, face, neck, and clothes, and with a tail of half-a-dozen well got-up and equally greasy soldiers at my heels; doing the great man, with my garment well over my nose at every festival and funeral worth attending; "hanging out" extensively when I had a few shillings to spend; sponging on my neighbours when, as was oftener the case, I had nothing:—in fact, living a most agreeable life on a very limited income. I cannot deny that I look back to those times with a certain feeling of regret. It was the only period of my life in which I ever felt myself a really great man. I "cry very small" in England, with a much greater expenditure. The men will not look after me with admiration, nor the girls make songs about me here.

The details of my Abyssinian life may, with the materials I have already supplied, be left to the reader's imagination. Like all happy moments, those years passed over very quickly, and now appear to me more like a dream than anything else. I had no annoyances of any kind; was fortunate enough to leave the country without, I believe, a single personal enemy; and beyond having received a lance through my clothes, between

my right arm and side, when endeavouring to separate some combatants who had got drunk at a wedding—and, on another occasion, having been rather badly hurt with a blow on the back from a club or stone—I may say that neither my life, limbs, nor health, were ever in danger. Meanwhile, as I have before hinted, I was living without any means; my supplies and letters having been unaccountably detained on the way, so that from the time of my leaving Cairo, two years and a quarter before, I was in the dark about Europe and European goings on.

I must here mention that I had, during this period, much cause to be grateful to Captain Haines, I. N., political agent at Aden, who, hearing of my distressed condition, kindly directed the master of a merchant brig, which happened to call at Massàwa, to lend me some money on his account. I esteem this great act of good nature the more, as at that time I had never seen him, nor even had any letter of introduction to him. However, near the end of May, 1845, I was one morning congratulated on the arrival, at Massàwa, of the 'Constance' (H.E.I.C. schooner), which I was told had brought me one or two large boxes. I had so often before been disappointed by such reports, having no less than three times sent messengers to the coast to bring up imaginary supplies, brought by imaginary vessels, and then, after ten days or a fortnight's painful suspense, finding that I had to pay the couriers, and had not a farthing to receive, that I was inclined at first to disbelieve the report of my good fortune; but a

coincidence settled the matter in my superstitious mind, and I sent again. This time report had nôt lied, for scarcely had my people left me three days when an Arabic letter from Houssien Effendi confirmed it. In due time the boxes themselves appeared, and I realized a pleasure in reading letters and newspapers which I had by no means expected, my ideas and feelings having become rather Abyssinian.

The rains were just setting in; still I felt that I must make up my mind for a start, or wait for another remittance; for, after my debts of honour, and the still more numerous and equally imperative debts of gratitude, were discharged, the balance would barely carry me to Sennár, and would be insufficient if I remained a few months longer in Abyssinia. Accordingly I set about my preparations *instanter*. These are soon made when a man travels as I do, with next to nothing in the baggage department; but what between paying the necessary visits of adieu to my many friends, and a decided tussle between duty and inclination, I did not get away from Àdoua till late in June (I will not be sure if it was not the first week in July). I will spare myself the recollection, and my readers the perusal, of a very moist, unpleasant leave-taking: a crowd of both sexes came to see me off, although to avoid such an occurrence I had secretly fixed my departure for an early hour in the morning. Suffice it to say I was nearly wet through before I left my own doors. At last, off we were—for myself I confess to having experienced a very queer, indescribable feeling about the nose, throat,

and pit of the stomach, and I believe that for the first time since my arrival in the country I wished I had had a pocket-handkerchief. Whatever were the sensations of her rider, they did not seem at all to communicate themselves to my mule, and we reached successively Axum and Maitowáro without any occurrence save an attack of ophthalmia, which kept me a day in the latter village. Our road branched off from Axum to Addy Ãbo, just after entering the plain of Solekhlekha. Three more days' ride, over a fertile and well-watered table-land, brought us to Devra Abbai (the great monastery), after passing the villages of Belliss, Addy Giddad, and Adega Sheikha. This part of our journey was somewhat devoid of interest; we had a few words at Belliss with a party of soldiers who stopped our porters, pretending that they wanted customs duty, but on my coming up the matter was soon set to rights, as the leader of the party happened to be an old acquaintance of mine.

As for the scenery by the road, I heard say that it was tolerably monotonous, with the exception of occasional glimpses of distant mountains, but I saw nothing, for my eyes were bandaged from the effects of my late attack. About half-way across the plain we passed a ravine and stream called Gammalo, where may still be seen scattered bones of some of the fugitives from the great battle of Mai Islamai, the field of which is about two days' journey further on. This serves to show with what cruel determination the Gallas pursued and slaughtered their vanquished foes even to this distance.

At Adega Sheikha we left the Gondar caravan route, which turns in a south-westerly direction, while ours continued westward. We found the village of Devra Abbai built in a deep hollow or chasm, and so nearly concealed, that, when approaching it from some directions, you would scarcely imagine yourself to be near habitations, seeing nothing but a wide tract of table-land before you.

We were shown into a large oblong building, in shape and size much resembling an English barn, but here built of stones and mud, and thatched over; it was, I believe, intended for religious festivals, and occasionally for the reception of travellers. My three days' journey in the sun had been the means of bringing on a most violent return of ophthalmia, but, as some of my readers may not know what that complaint is, and I am sure I hope none of them ever will by experience, I may as well explain that it is a severe inflammation of the eyes, and, when it reaches the height it generally does in Africa, those useful organs are completely glued up, so that they cannot be opened till they have been bathed for a considerable time in warm water, and when they are opened, which is only done for the purpose of putting in some collyrium, nothing is distinguishable of what should be white, and blue, grey, or black, but a blood-red mass. It will be easily guessed, that to be laid up for a few days, or, as often happens, for weeks or months, stone blind, and with the agreeable sensation of having your eyes filled with sharp, coarse sand, red hot, is by no means an enviable situation. Well, this was

my case at Devra Abbai for about ten days. The servants had made me a sort of tent inside the barn, more completely to secure for me the darkness I required, for, though the building was of very great area, and lighted only by a door at each end, it was a great deal too brilliant for me. While upon this subject I may as well say how I treated myself—who knows but it may be of use? I ate next to nothing, took plenty of jalap, &c., had some blood taken from behind the ears, and a few drops of solution of sulphate of zinc dropped into each eye three or four times a day. I believe this to be as good a recipe as any for ordinary cases: I have tried it often with success; but I must say that the dropping-in part of the business is not agreeable. First the eye is opened as I have before described, and then it must be held open, for the faintest glimmer of light is unbearable, while an assistant drops in the collyrium by means of a bit of rolled paper or a small reed. I cannot make up my mind whether this operation or poking in bits of red-hot wire would be the most disagreeable, but should guess that the sensation would be nearly the same.

I remained a close prisoner till the day before we started, so that I had little time to make many inquiries or observations respecting the place. I walked about for a few hours only, and visited the church, which is built at the bottom of the hollow, the village rising like an amphitheatre from it; behind the church is a large plot of grass, backed by a wood of considerable size; a stream, forming in one place a natural cascade, ripples among the trees, which are the homes of many families

of the small grey monkeys which were playing about them, apparently unconscious of the wickedness of Beni Adam, many of them sitting quite composedly on the nearest boughs, scratching themselves and looking at me. Several parroquets also fluttered about, seemingly with equal confidence. The sanctity of the place is their sure protection; no one, not even the most profane, would dare to molest them in this holy retreat.

It would be as useless for any man, even the most graphic describer, to attempt to convey a just idea of tropical climate and scenery to a person who has never seen anything of the kind, as to describe music to a man born deaf, or colour to one who has never known the light. An initiated reader may, even from the little I have said, appreciate the exquisite beauty of the place. But not in scenery only does a traveller feel the great difficulty, nay, the impossibility, of conveying to his readers anything like an idea of the original; in manners and customs, even in adventures, the utmost he can hope for is a correct but hard outline—a sketch, such as a young lady, innocent of all artistic talent, would manufacture with the aid of a camera lucida, wanting in feeling, spirit, and colour; I do not mean to deny that some men, who have never been within 5000 miles of Abyssinia, could take this very book of mine as a basis, and from it make another with lots of feeling, abundance of spirit, and colouring enough to give one the ophthalmia. What I mean is, that a description of things so totally different from what we are accustomed to, as everything in those remote countries is, cannot

help losing its African feeling and becoming Anglicized, first by an English description, secondly and mainly by passing through the English imagination of the reader. This is the least that can happen to the best of books. For my own part, when I look back over these pages, and thence to the original as depicted in my memory, I say, as I should of one of the afore-mentioned young lady's sketches, "Yes; that's as long as it should be, and that as short; it might have been done with a pair of compasses; but as for a likeness—Faugh! I could cut a better portrait of my ladye love out of a swede turnip!"—and then I throw down my pen in disgust and leave it idle for a month or two. Amiable but rather impatient reader, I am not digressing; for we are not on our journey, but seated in the most delightful shade that ever came to the relief of sore eyes; we don't start till to-morrow,—to-morrow will soon be here.

Alas, poor Yakoub! to-morrow came—another morrow saw him no more! I have been selfish, in not having already mentioned him as a kind friend, though a servant, and one who nursed me tenderly during my blindness. My introduction to him was as follows:—A few days before our final departure from Adoua I was astonished at the sight of a strange white entering my yard. From a note of introduction which he brought me from Mr. Schimper he proved to be a German, who had just arrived in Abyssinia expecting great things, but who, finding that all was poverty, and that no money was to be made, was anxious, by any means, to leave the country, but had not wherewithal to pay his

expenses to the coast. I spoke to him on the subject, and he told me that, having heard that Mr. Schimper was a prince, he had little idea that his principality only produced him a few dollars' worth of native cloths and some corn per annum. He had hoped to have obtained a situation with his countryman, and truly he was a man who would have been very useful to any one in those parts, for he seemed to have been of almost every trade, and to be able to turn his hand to anything. I never exactly knew what had brought him into such an outlandish country in search of a livelihood, nor do I remember whether I ever asked him his name; he was many years older than myself, but, with the quiet steadiness of manhood, retained all the vigour of youth. In fact, he was everything that one could wish for as a servant or companion in such a country. I offered to assist him to return to Massâwa, representing to him that the journey I was about to undertake would not perhaps be the most agreeable one, excepting for the novelty and adventure it might afford; he accepted a small loan from me for present purposes, but declared that he should much prefer my route, and, as for roughing it, the more of that the merrier. He refused for the time any fixed salary, as I was taking him to do him a service, suggesting that when we arrived at Khartoum I should give him what I liked for the time that had passed, and that, if we suited each other, he should accompany me in the journey through Africa which I proposed undertaking. Thus much, coupled with his kind attendance on me when laid up at Devra Abbai, is all

I know of his life; his melancholy and untimely death will follow almost immediately.

We started early, in order to effect our passage of the Taccazy as soon after noon as possible. Every moment was precious to us; the rains had already so much swollen the river that no one had attempted the upper ford (on the ordinary Gondar road) for several days past. We procured a guide, whose business was to assist us in crossing the torrents, and to show us the way over the wild, uninhabited district that lies between this part of the country and Walkait. He told us that we should perhaps have to retrace our steps, if we found the river too deep and strong for us; but that, as the ford to which he was about to conduct us was very broad, and consequently shallow, we might possibly get over.

Never did I feel in better spirits than that morning. We rode for some hours over a very wild picturesque country varied with table-lands, valleys, and hills of all shapes and sizes, passed near the scene of the battle of Mai Islamai, and about noon began the actual descent towards the river. For an hour or two we were buried in deep ravines, with rocks and trees overhanging us, till at length we emerged into a broad and woody flat, through the trees of which the reflection of the afternoon sun on its waters showed us the Taccazy, now swollen to a majestic river, at a distance of about half a mile. Most of our party set off at a run, eager to get a nearer view of it. I, for my part, had seen nothing like a river since I left the Nile; for the Mareb is, as I have said, but a rivulet in the dry season. Some of

our people had never before seen a river of any sort, and looked upon it with awe and wonder. Indeed, it was a noble stream, in many places nearly, if not quite, as broad as the Thames at Greenwich; but in its rapid, boisterous descent, more like the Rhone as it leaves the Lake of Geneva. On the opposite shore appeared a belt of forest similar to that we had just crossed, though neither so wide nor so flat, and in rear of this rose a dark mass of abrupt rocks. We ascended the stream for a considerable distance before we arrived at the ford where we were to cross. As the river did not appear so high as the guide had feared, he recommended a short halt before we entered the water; and, in the mean while, the baggage was made up into convenient parcels, and perishable articles packed in skins, so as to protect them as much as possible from a wetting. After sitting a few minutes we began to strip, and tie up our clothes in bundles, which we were to carry, each man his own, turban-like, on his head. I was proceeding very leisurely in my preparations, finishing a pipe, and waiting to be summoned, when I heard one of the Abyssinians call out, "Come back, come back!" A black who was with us answered him, "Oh, never fear, he's a child of the sea!" I looked up, and saw Yakoub wading out in about two feet of water, and occasionally taking a duck under as if to cool himself. Aware that he was ignorant of the language, I called to him, telling him that he had better not go alone, but wait till some one, acquainted with the peculiarities of the river, should guide him; he answered,

laughing, that he was not going much farther, and that he could swim. I did not think there could be any danger if he remained where he was, the water not being more than a yard deep, and he had told me before that he was an extremely good swimmer; but the guides had cautioned me of the danger of the whirlpools, currents, and mud, which they said rendered it impossible for anything, even a fish, to live in some parts of the torrent; so when on looking up I saw him moving about, I again called to him, begging of him with much earnestness to return. He answered something that made me laugh, at the same time swinging his arms about like the sails of a windmill, so as to splash the water all round him. He might have been thirty yards from the shore, and a little lower down the stream than where I sat. Still talking with him, I looked at what I was doing for a single instant, and then, raising my eyes, saw him as if trying to swim on his back, and beating the water with his hands, but in a manner so different from his former playful splashing, that, without knowing why, I called to him to ask what was the matter. He made no answer, but seemed as if moving a little down the stream for a yard or two, and then quicker and quicker. I was up in an instant, and ran down shouting to the people to help him, though at the same time I thought that he was playing us a trick to frighten us. A thick mass of canes and bushes, under the shade of which most of the servants had been sitting, overhung the river for several yards' distance, just below where I was. Having to pass behind these, I lost sight

of him, and before I reached the other end of them the horrible death-howl of the Abyssinians warned me that he had sunk to rise no more. We ran along the shore for some miles, in the melancholy hope that perhaps the torrent might cast his body on to some bank, or that he might be caught by a stump or bough, many of which stuck up in the water, but it was an almost hopeless chance. The swiftest horse could not have equalled the pace of that fierce stream, and probably the body had been carried several miles before we had got over one. At times our attention would be attracted for a moment by a clot of white foam left on the mud, but at length we retraced our steps, sad, fatigued, torn to pieces by the mimosa bushes through which we had forced our naked bodies, and having seen no signs of Yakoub since he sank. From the time I saw him, full of health and spirits, standing splashing the water in the bright sunshine, what a change had come over our whole party! Twenty seconds after, his death-wail was raised—

> "One moment, and the gush went forth
> Of music-mingled laughter,—
> The struggling splash and deathly shriek
> Were there the instant after.

And now that we were again on the spot, as if to make everything more gloomy, the sun was set, and scarcely a sound was to be heard but the dull moaning of that fatal river.

The guide, who had remained behind, or returned sooner than the rest, urged us to cross immediately, as the water had already risen several inches, and was still

rising fast. So we entered two and two together, each pair of us connected by a couple of large poles laid across our shoulders, to which were tied portions of the baggage and some heavy stones. This last addition was a good precaution to give us greater weight to resist the stream; we edged upwards for some distance, and then, gradually crossing, arrived in safety on the opposite shore. It took us a long time to get over, and not one of us but acknowledged to having several times been very nearly carried off his legs. The water reached my breast in the deepest part, and consequently the chins of most of our people. We passed within a few yards of the very spot where I had seen poor Yakoub for the last time. In the morning we had looked forward to the crossing with the greatest pleasure, the risk attending it only appearing as a little spice to make it all the more agreeable. When we first saw the water, it seemed all bright from the sunshine and our own cheerfulness; when we crossed it, it was dark, chilly, and the grave of our comrade. The dangers were doubled by the rising of the river, and every spark of excitement or adventure had been quenched by the melancholy occurrences and fatigues of the day. I must say for the Abyssinians and blacks also, that on this occasion they manifested much sympathy and kindness of heart, appearing to feel as deeply for our poor friend's fate as if he had been a near and dear relation to them, although he had only been with us a few days, and, except by signs and a few broken words, he could converse with none of the party. Moreover, not one of

them for a moment hesitated, when his turn came, to enter the river, though none could swim except the guide and three others. We never arrived at any satisfactory conclusion as to what could have been the cause of our loss. What could have produced the sudden change in his position which I first noticed? Everything was suggested; one thought a crocodile had taken him, and to sustain this argument it was said, by those who had seen him from the lower end of the bushes, that as he got into deeper water his head sank gradually down, till it disappeared in a deep pool nearly opposite to where they were standing, and that he struggled in the water, but did not appear to swim. This seemed probable, as, of course, if the animal kept at the bottom, his victim's head would gradually disappear as the water deepened. Others, again, said that an eddy had caught him, and that he had lost his presence of mind, and had not thought of swimming; and as to his sinking, that was accounted for by the fact of the hole in which he disappeared being (as it evidently was) a powerful whirlpool, which might have drawn him down into the mud. I leaned to the former of these opinions, though, certainly, the principal argument against it was that he never uttered a sound; while it was most probable that a man, feeling himself suddenly bitten, would call out if only from the shock. These melancholy thoughts and discussions occupied us for a time, as we prepared our resting-place on the western shore; but one of the people in gathering wood happening to light on a human skull reminded us that we were in the imme-

diate neighbourhood of our old *friends* of Rohabaita, the Barea. This little incident served to turn our thoughts into a more agreeable channel, for it led the guide into a series of interesting anecdotes relative to their former attacks on travellers in that immediate neighbourhood, and also on the convent of Devra Abbai, and some others in Waldabba. Two caravans had been waylaid during the past season on the hills just above us, and he judged that the vultures must have brought the skull thence. Thus for a time forgetting our sorrows, we were a little more cheerful. Having passed a hard day, and knowing that many such were before us, we tried to rest, but, the conversation ceasing, nothing was to be heard but

> "The jackal's cry—the distant moan
> Of the hyæna, fierce and lone;—
> And that eternal, saddening sound
> Of torrents in the glen beneath."

I doubt if any of us slept soundly; for my own part, I started up twice, once fancying that I heard the death-howl again, and once that poor Yakoub was calling me by name.

Among other disasters connected with the crossing of the Taccazy was the unaccountable disappearance of a talisman which I had worn round my neck during the whole of my stay in Abyssinia. The natives attributed all the misfortunes of the day to this loss, which must have occurred before our reaching the river, or while I was undressing, though we did not become aware of it till I was dressing on the other side. Now, many

clever men of my acquaintance take great interest in the revelations of clairvoyants, the magic crystal, and such-like mysteries; they may also have faith in charms, and perhaps my readers would like to know what mine was. I believe it was as good as any other. I myself own to having had much faith in its efficacy; I may truly say that I can date the commencement of all the troubles, illnesses, and other human miseries which have hitherto fallen to my share from the day it left me; for, up to that time, beyond the ordinary complaints of childhood and many a sound and well-deserved whipping at school, I had led a life of sunshine. The remainder of this volume will show that a few clouds immediately succeeded the heavy one I have just described. During the next three or four years passed in Africa I had a succession of all the worst tropical fevers, which nearly caused me to "settle" for ever and a day in their country; and since my return to England I have, in every sense of the word, experienced truly English weather, few and transient glimpses of sunshine, a heavy storm or two, and lots of nasty, muggy, bilious, drizzly days—and all this is doubtless attributable to the loss of my talisman. I hope my readers are most eager to be told of what this wonderful charm was composed. Its history was this. When I was unpacking some boxes and getting rid of my European clothes at Cairo, I chanced to light upon a small and very much withered bouquet wrapped up in a bit of paper, a date on which proved it to have been worn by me about the time of my first appearance in the glorious, manly, and

picturesque costume of a swallow-tailed dress-coat. It being of no use to any one as a gift, I kept it, had it neatly wrapped in a waxed cloth, and afterwards cased in leather by an Abyssinian saddler, so that it made a very respectable-looking amulet. I have been asked what it was: I always answered "A relic"—of a saint, no doubt. From speaking of it with respect, I at last got to reverence it myself, and to have great faith in its efficacy. Perhaps some of my mesmeric readers may be able to explain that a man's directing his ideas to any one particular object, for a length of time, may give that otherwise passive object some influence over him, and thus the efficacy of charms might be established. For my part, I really don't know anything about it, but I may as well mention the opinion that a Turkish friend of mine gave on the subject; he was a rough old soldier, and had seen a great deal of powder-smoke, but had never been scathed by lead or iron either in a general action or in a gin-shop quarrel. He told me that he wore a powerful charm against these metals. I asked him if he truly believed that he owed his good fortune to its protection? "Undoubtedly," he at first answered; "and, besides myself, I know many more who, wearing them, have passed unhurt through the fiercest battles." But after a while he added, "If you want to know my *real* opinion, between ourselves, I fancy that, of the many men who go to fight with bits of paper tied on their arms, a part get shot, and don't take the trouble to rise again and tell us the story, while the rest, returning unharmed, swear by the efficacy of their talisman."

Some of my readers may vote that I have (to use a schoolboy term) been attempting a "sell" on them in this matter; in truth, I fear that many who expected to hear of hyæna's hair, newt's blood, toad's fat, or other such ingredient of witchcraft, may have been disappointed, but still my withered roses had a charm to me, even besides that of superstition. I could not make up my mind to throw them away, for they formed the last link, as it were, the only memorial that connected me with the life I had been brought up to. They had a curious power of representing England and English customs to me in different lights according as was best for the state of mind in which I happened to be at the moment. At times, when, lost in the excitement of a savage life, and dazzled by the splendour of a tropical climate, I might have almost wished to forget that there was such a place as home, they would remind me of friends and scenes I had left behind, paint civilization in her brightest colours, and even so far "humbug" me as to persuade me that a drizzly November day was only a foil to set off the brightness of an English fireside. At other times, when I may have been a little desponding from feeling that I might never be able to leave Abyssinia, they would amuse me vastly, by showing up European manners and customs in another light, so as to console me with the thought "Well, I should like to go back again, because, after all, it is home, but certainly this is a great deal the better place of the two."—Europe in general, but perhaps England in particular, has customs which, to a stranger, or even to a native who, like myself, has the power of

closing an English mind's eye and opening a nigger one whenever he pleases, appear as wonderful and unaccountable as any that I have described or that could be found among the most barbarous nations in the world. When I say that in looking back to my recollections of home, and comparing them with what was passing around me at the time, I preferred the latter, it was because the two pictures I thus placed before my imagination (I suppose it was my nigger one) appeared to me, the one like the bold, rough sketch of a great master, the other like a similar sketch when worked up by an inferior artist, who, thinking to improve it, had resorted to every device of sponge, brush, handkerchief, thumb, sugar-candy, gum-water, body colour, and scratching, till he had made a picture, highly finished in regard to detail, but totally devoid of clearness, nature, and truth.

I must put a stop to this subject rather abruptly—civilization *versus* uncivilization is a dangerous question for me to enter upon: little gifted by nature, and more than half a savage by education, I might fall into conclusions which would not tend to raise me in the opinions of many of my readers. These last pages have served the purpose for which they were solely intended —to divert my mind from unpleasant recollections. So remembering that, having crossed the Taccazy, we are now out of Tigrè, and in the province of Waldabba, we will make a fresh start on our journey.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

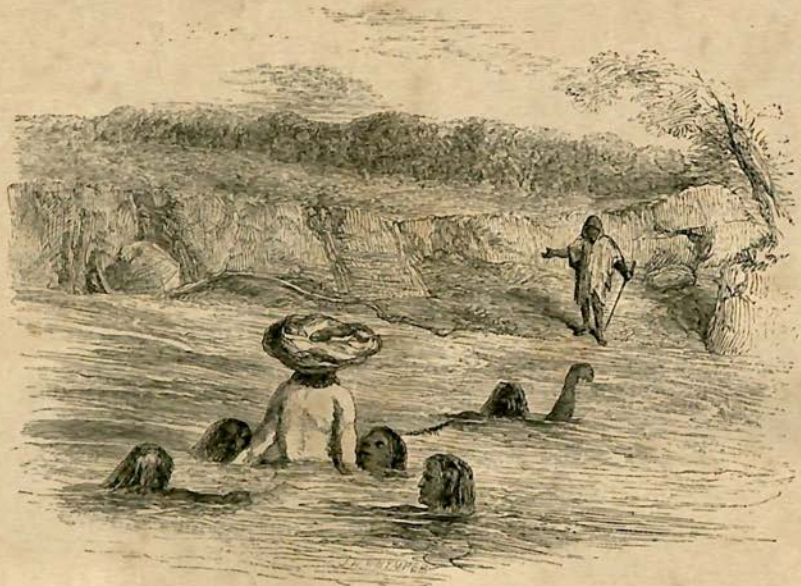
JOURNEY TO CAFTA.

As I have said, we were now in Waldàbba. Our next three days' journey lay along the frontiers of that province, in the uninhabited waste between it and the Barea country. We had frequent reminders of the neighbourhood of these savages in the shape of scattered bones of their victims; there was less danger of our being attacked by them at that season of the year than at any other time, as they would hardly be on the look-out for travellers in such wet weather. After crossing a wild table-land, in some places covered with mimosa forest, but without road or any other sign of humanity, we arrived on the third day at the Zarrima. This river we supposed would have offered us no impediment, but on reaching it we found that it was a deep rapid, with, in some places, nearly as much pretension to the title of cataract as the falls of the Nile in Upper Egypt; the guide, however, consoled us with the assurance that it would soon go down, and that perhaps by morning it would be little more than ankle-deep. But it did not go down; next morning it was a good deal increased, both

in volume and rapidity. To cut a long story short, it kept increasing a yard and decreasing a foot for four days, during which time we were all but starved. We had had no idea of meeting with this delay, and, expecting to arrive at some village of Walkait in three or at most four days from the Taccazy, had provided ourselves with provisions sufficient for little more than that time. Queer stories were told of some of our party having eaten a horrid dead fish which they found, and of others making little excursions into the interior, professedly for the sake of collecting fuel, but in truth to get hold of any newt, lizard, snake, or other reptile they might chance to meet with. Some of these stories were not altogether romances. We had only a very few dried vetches each for food, and were miserably off in other respects, for the rain poured down on us three hours out of every four, and the neighbourhood was bare of old wood, the vegetation being mostly of small shrubs; such fuel as we could procure was moreover so thoroughly saturated that we were scarcely ever able to get up a fire. Four days of this sort of life being enough for us, we determined to try and swim the river. The guide and another of our party plunged in some hundred yards above where they meant to land, and arrived in safety on the other shore. They had chosen a comparatively smooth reach, and still were carried down stream a very long distance, though the torrent itself could not have been more than fifteen to twenty yards wide. The guide, who had taken an inflated goat-skin to support him, returned, but the other man remained

where he was, as he was by no means a good swimmer, and had had much difficulty in getting across. The bed of the river is in a deep crack in the plain, seemingly the work of some convulsion of nature, and the torrent in consequence, having no means of passing the high rocks which wall it in on either side, rises rapidly to a great height every time a flush of rain comes down from the hills. On the guide's return he set about constructing a sort of raft, by which means I and the other non-swimmers were to cross. I watched his proceedings naturally with some interest, and, in a very few minutes, when it was finished, exclaimed, "And is this the bark which is to carry Cæsar and his fortunes?" It was simply a faggot of sticks, the biggest scarce half as thick as your wrist, most of them green, and all saturated with water, in fact, barring the last two qualifications, just such a bundle as an old woman would carry under her arm from a hedge-bottom. I tried its buoyancy in a corner of backwater, and laughed heartily at its maker on finding that it could not even float itself, much less carry me; but he explained that the faggot was only the horse I was to bestride, at the same time pointing out to me the afore-mentioned goat-skin bag, into which he was packing my watch and other small and perishable articles, as the floating power which was to sustain me. This being the case, I suggested, on seeing him stuff in a few small articles of clothing, that the more room he left for air the better; but he answered that he filled it pretty well with solid articles in order to give it more power to resist the pressure of the water, which might

otherwise make it bulge about, and so render my seat rather unsteady. Having packed it, he proceeded to blow it full, and secured the mouth with a string; it was next tied to one end of the faggot, and the whole machine placed on the edge of a rock, the top of which was about nine inches under water. Two lads, who could not swim, and yet volunteered to accompany me, got down and held it, one on each side; I mounted straddle-legs, with the bag in front of me, the guide holding by a rope which was to lead us: he would not put the rope round his shoulder, as is customary, lest, as he afterwards explained, we, coming to grief, should drag him with us. The other two swimmers followed behind to give us an occasional push when necessary. In this order of procession we dropped into the stream, and away we went. I can convey no better idea of the pace at which we were carried down the moment we got into the current than by mentioning that I felt exactly the same sharp thrill up my back that one does when coming downwards from a considerable height in a swing, and that an instant after our launch, turning round to answer to the cheers of the men whom we had left behind, I saw them running, but at two or three hundred yards' distance. In a few seconds we passed the man who had first swum across, and was awaiting our arrival at the spot where we had expected to land. He shouted to us to strike out manfully for the shore, as there was a "farraseynia" (horseman, meaning whirlpool) just below. The guide had hitherto seemed to have forgotten to swim, but now he put his back to it,



Crossing a Torrent.

and, aided by the other men, tumbled us somehow or other on to a stump of a tree, from which with some difficulty we were hauled ashore. As for our passage, narrow as the torrent was, we must have been carried nearer half a mile than a quarter before we got across it. My chief ground of fear was lest one of my *hangers-on* should be flurried and overset me, but truly they behaved very well; a joking word, with a lift by the nose, chin, or hair, when I saw either of them getting lower in the water or nervous, kept up their spirits, and they landed as fresh and frisky as possible.

My horse, aided by the two mules, had to swim over with the best part of the baggage. After resting a short time the guide and two others recrossed with his floating bag, and drove the animals into the water. They were turned in with the packs tied on to their saddles, and a man to each of them; the stream soon carried them into the middle of the channel, and we who had crossed first were stationed at intervals on the shore to encourage them in their efforts to land on our side. One of the mules made a mess of it, floundering about so as nearly to drown the man who was with her, and ended by getting rid of her burden; she had a narrow escape, for she was carried down into some very rough water, and landed with difficulty a considerable way off. Both of the mules had to be drawn out of the water by sheer strength, and then they lay on the ground panting from fright and fatigue for some moments; the horse, on the contrary, only required to be helped up the bank, and, when relieved of his burden, he shook himself, and

began to feed as quietly as if in a stable. The porters and one or two of our people refused to cross, preferring to make their way as well as they might up the stream till they arrived at some village of Waldabba. I never heard of them afterwards, but should fear that they must have had a rough journey, as they were entirely destitute of provision of any kind, and would have to trust to fish or wild vegetables for subsistence: they had little or no chance of obtaining the former; of the latter not much more.

After bidding them adieu, drying our property in the sun, and resting, we packed our baggage on the animals and set off on foot for Amba Abraham. It was a rough walk over stones and through a wooded, thorny country, and when we reached the foot of the conical hill on which the village is built we were all so completely knocked up from hunger, thirst, fatigue, and such-like little incidents, not uncommon to African travel, that none of us felt disposed to ascend it, so we lay down under a tree and awaited the arrival of some of the country people. Most of the frontier villages in this neighbourhood are constructed on high places, somewhat difficult of access, and some are further protected by a surrounding wall; these precautions are taken to prevent the inhabitants from being surprised by the rather too warm visits of their neighbours the Barea.

It was near sunset when we arrived, and, shortly after, a peasant with a flock of goats passed us on his way homeward. Seeing that we were half starved, he endeavoured to drive a very hard bargain with us, but at

last we induced him to sell us a little milk and an old he-goat for twice its value. If any one of my readers is fond of savoury dishes, in the shape of high game, &c., and wants a change, let him go to the goats and select a fine old patriarch, father of the flock, choose the one that has the longest horns, wears the finest beard, stamps most with his fore-feet, snorts loudest, and bleats gruffest; let him take him, and, having killed and flayed him, lay him on the embers for a few minutes till he is about warmed through, and then eat him all but raw, as we did from sheer hunger. Let him do this, and, if he don't find the old chap gamey enough for any one, he may say that I don't know what's good; and, if he gets the flavour out of his mouth for a week, I should feel obliged to him for the name and address of his tooth-brush maker. After our rather too savoury meal we ascended and slept in the village. Next morning we resumed our road; but here again I must remind the reader that, though I frequently use the word "road," in most cases it merely means our direction, route, or journey, for there are no roads at all in Abyssinia, only here and there in the populous and most frequented districts are traces like sheep-paths, where a succession of passers have worn away the herbage, while on many routes, such as that I am now describing, three or four days may pass without your meeting with any sign to show that human beings have ever travelled that way before you.

From Amba Abraham we descended the hill through a rough mass of stones and thorny bushes, which tumbled

us over and tore our clothes at every step. My horse, which was walking alone, performed a complete summerset, tumbling head over heels (or rather *vice versâ*) from the top of a small rock into a mass of bushes below, with no worse misfortune, however, than the breakage of his saddle. My mule also rolled, rider and all, down a bank, but we got up again all the better for it.

We had been led to expect that, on reaching the plain, we should find a track which the people of the last village said would guide us for some distance on our way. After some search we came upon it, but it was so faint and so *varicose* that we several times lost it before reaching the Quollima, a rivulet (now almost a river) distant some four or five miles from the village we had left. We found it to be about knee-deep, and the stream very strong. Three or four miles farther we came to Denderàqua, a streamlet which with the last joins the Zarrima before reaching the Taccazy. Here I rested under the shade of some trees, in one of the most picturesque spots I ever saw. Some of our people who had been loitering behind came up with us at this place, and brought me a leather pouch that I usually carried on my saddle-bow, and which they had found on the ground where my mule had rolled with me; its former contents, my note-book, pipe, and tobacco, were however not with it, so I sent two men back again to look for them. This was my second loss of the same nature, though it was of slight importance, for the book only contained a few sketches and my journal from Àdoua. My great loss was in the Zarrima. Delayed by this

circumstance, and anxious to give the messengers a chance of overtaking us, we halted for the night on the Monkey's stream (Mai Wàag), distant not more than a mile from the last. The whole of the next day was spent in wandering about, none of us having any idea of the direction we ought to follow. We passed the night on a small brook, called Waiva. It was a pretty rivulet, and the clean sand which edged it tempted us to lie down close to the water. We slept deliciously; it was the most comfortable couch I had lain on for many a night. But some envious god or goddess, looking on our position as too snug, compared with his or her damp bed on a cloud, mischievously dropped some wet on the hills, which so swelled the rivulet that I awoke a little after midnight fancying that it was very cold, and found that we were all lying in six inches of water. Some of the party got up about the same moment, but, such is the wonderful tenacity with which Morpheus holds the eyelids of many niggers, that we had the greatest difficulty in making one or two of the others budge, and, when by dint of kicking and shouting we got them to rise, it was only to stagger away a few paces, and then, all wet as they were, they tumbled down and, rolling themselves up, went to sleep again more soundly than before. Making the best of an uncomfortable business, the rest of us soon followed their example. Next day, after a few more wanderings, we came on to the track made by the passage of Lemma's troops the previous year, and still visible in places; after following its direction for some time it led us to a more beaten path, used by the

peasantry of the country when going to their mazzagas, that is, the low flats of dark soil which the people cultivate, though they live on the neighbouring hills, the mazzagas at certain seasons of the year being very unhealthy. All our journey from Amba Abraham lay across these plains. In places the country was well wooded with mimosas and other trees, and, whenever we passed at all near the inhabited hills, we saw great plenty of cotton and other crops. These plains are abundantly watered, numerous streams crossing them on their way to the Taccazy.

After continuing our new road for a few miles we entered a dense forest of mimosas, which shaded us throughout the remainder of the day; at night we camped near the brook Minminai. At this season of the year the whole country is well moistened by the rains, and the low plains, such as the mazzaga we were crossing, are deep in mud, which is highly disagreeable to a barefooted pedestrian, the moisture softening the skin and making it more penetrable by thorns. The reader will say that this fact might have been left to his imagination, as being self-evident, but will perhaps ask, "How did you manage to sleep on the sloppy bosom of a bog, such as this must have been?" This was quite simple. Excepting on the occasion when, tempted by the sand of the Waiva, we got hydropathic treatment gratis, we every night made ourselves mattresses of pieces of wood, large stones, &c., which we collected and laid together till of sufficient height to keep us well out of the mud and wet. A tanned hide spread upon this formed

our bed, and, when it came on to rain, our covering also. Now this may appear an uncomfortable sort of couch; and indeed it is not altogether luxurious until you are used to it. It requires a little knack, and some turning round and round like a dog, to adapt the risings and hollows of your body to those of your bed. A man would not sleep well if he rested his hip-bone on the apex of a conical pebble, but with patience, a little management, and a hard day's work, a good night's rest is not a difficult thing to obtain under any circumstances. I trust I shall not be deemed effeminate if I suggest that a few green boughs, if such can be obtained reasonably dry and tolerably free from thorns, may, with advantage, be added as substitute for a feather-bed. In this journey, however, we seldom obtained such luxuries. My dog, "Maychál Boggo," did not like rain, so when a heavy shower fell during the night—my readers must remember that tropical rains are by no means like a Scotch mist—he would come to me, and, without any ceremony or whining, make a determined attempt to work himself under my covering. Maychál, though a good and faithful beast, was rather large for a bedfellow, being as big as a Newfoundland, and withal his hair was of that longish, thick, coarse description, which is peculiar to some of the mastiff breeds, and which, especially when well wetted, is considerably odoriferous. A day's tramp through the mud did not generally make him cleaner, nor was he able to be very choice in his diet, so, when he attempted to force himself into my society, I would say, "Maychál Boggo, so far as board goes, you shall

share with me the last crumb, but really my bed is but just large enough to contain me alone." But he would not listen to reason—answering to my polite speech only by seizing the corner of my leather with his teeth, and tugging away at it in the most systematic manner, till, after getting a few quarts of rain into my bed, I was obliged to make the best of a bad job and let him in, endeavouring at the same time to leave him the outside place, for the skin which was wrapped round me, half over and half under, was not broad. He, however, was selfish, I fear, for he would not be satisfied until he had got into the fold, leaving me in the worst place, and growling and snarling at me if I attempted to resist. His pertinacity was too amusing to allow me to get angry, and I was in general too sleepy to have troubled myself about the matter if he would but have kept still when he was there. But no such luck—if a hyæna or other animal chose to approach our camp fifty times during the night, each time my dog would start up, and, planting his great paws on to my eyes, nose, mouth, or any part of my body which happened to lie in his direction, bark himself into a fury for a few seconds, and then dash off in pursuit, dragging off my covering, and leaving me "puris naturalibus," at the mercy of the storm. Often did I vow that he should disturb me no more, and as often would he return wet and reeking from his expedition, sometimes with bleeding marks of the hyæna's teeth, and serve me as before. This is a sample of the way we passed our nights.

Towards noon of the day following we began gradu-

ally to ascend from the mazzaga on to the inhabited table-land of Walkait; on our way we passed some small villages, the inhabitants of which were in a delightful state of primitive simplicity, whole populations turning out to see a white man for the first time in their lives, and willingly exchanging any little necessaries we required for a few needles or glass beads. Towards three or four o'clock we began climbing the hill on which the village of Quollita stands. It was a splendid wild ascent. In some places the rocky hill-side was covered with shrubs, in others we passed along narrow ledges overhanging deep and woody ravines; above us rose the mountain, and below, at a great distance, was spread the broad flat of the mazzaga. Arrived on the summit, what a magnificent view awaited us! The whole of my route from Maitowaro lay before me like a panorama. The hills of Addáro were visible in the distance, bearing a little north of east, and forming the boundary of the vast tract of country which lay between us, and which, from our elevation and distance, appeared a perfect plain, the valley of the Taccazy winding through it, and the mountain of Amba Abraham appe red quite close to us. The two servants whom I had sent back for my lost note-book had, after a fruitless search, arrived before us by a different route; we found them on the top of the hill looking out for us; they had prepared a lodging in the village, where we were well received and comfortably housed for the night. Our next day's road was over a very different kind of country from that of the previous days—a hilly

and moderately well populated district: we passed four villages, the last of which, Sola, is, like Quollita, of considerable size. A few miles from this place brought us to Cafta, the frontier town of this part of Abyssinia, and the market to which the Arabs from some of the Sennàri provinces resort. It happened to be market-day, and arriving early in the afternoon I strolled about while my people sought for lodgings. I attracted much attention, being quite a novelty. By most people I was voted a spy; by all I was pronounced a Turk, for, as in Tigrè they know all whites by the name of Copts, so here we are all of the family of Othmán. I met several Arabs, whose costume was precisely that of all the Nubian Bedouins; they had brought a quantity of salt from the neighbourhood of Souàkim, and were purchasing slaves and other articles of Abyssinian export. The market was crowded; the principal goods offered for sale seemed to be country cotton stuffs, horses, and slaves. The horses and slaves appeared to me to be of very inferior quality, the former fetching from three to nine dollars (12*s.* 6*d.* to 1*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*), and the latter very low prices compared with what I had seen at Massàwa and even Àdoua. The cloths of Walkait are well known all over the country; they are not quite so much esteemed as those of other parts of Tigrè, but are manufactured in great quantity, and are sold very cheap. My reputation of being a Turk had the effect of obtaining a direct refusal of lodging wherever we applied for it; and notwithstanding all my assertions to the contrary, and the use of every means of persuasion

I could command, it was not till late that I got leave from a very poor man to occupy a wretched hovel adjoining his habitation. Here I determined on a quiet halt for a few days, as I and most of my servants had been more or less ailing ever since our supper at Amba Abraham, the old he-goat we had eaten there never having been at all disposed to rest easy in our stomachs. I was not long left in peace, for the third night I was awakened by a noise, and found my hovel full of soldiers, who, with a good deal of rough language, informed me that I was their prisoner. It was a party from the camp of Lidge Hailo, governor of the frontier, and one of Dejatch Guangwoul's principal men. I was wrong in saying that they were rough, for it was only their leader Belladta Wassan, an ugly old brute, who began to bully and bluster as soon as he got in. Ill and weak as I was they carried me off, through a pouring rain, to the camp, more than a mile distant. Here I was introduced to Lidge Hailo, who assumed the tone and manners of a judge. I asked him rather roughly what right he had to treat me in that manner, which was answered by one of his attendants asking me what I meant by speaking to a great man so coolly. I replied that I was as great a man as he, and, moreover, the particular friend of Dejatch Shétou. A little more sparring of this sort ensued, for from being ill I was rather cross, which I ought not to have been, and it ended in my being consigned to a squad of soldiers, with orders that I was not to leave their hut on any pretext, nor to have access to my baggage, over which a guard was placed, nor to

be allowed any communication with my servants. I could obtain nothing from the chief in explanation of the motive of all this rigour, except that such were his orders. So I was led off to my prison; it was a very comfortable, good-sized hut, and the chief had the propriety to direct that a stretcher and piece of hide should be furnished me for a bed. I soon slept off my troubles, notwithstanding the noise made by my companions or guards. Next day I awoke quite in my usual state of philosophy, and highly amused at my situation. The soldiers collected in numbers to look at me and tried at first to divert themselves at my expense. After some little "*chaffing*," of which I took no notice, they began to dance about, going through their doumfáter or war-boast, and coming up to me, slipping their lances at me, and catching them by the butt when the point was within an inch or two of my body. I knew very well that I was in no danger if I only kept my temper, so, when the first man had performed his part, I took a piece of straw and gave it to him, telling him that it was a sword which I saw he needed; this raised a laugh against him, and, entering into the spirit of the thing, we went on famously. I acted the part of chief, and gave to one man a straw coronet, to another a similarly constructed bitoa or bracelet, to a third an imaginary mule, and so on, till unheard-of wealth was conferred on these poor fellows in aërial governments and herbaceous jewellery, while, to make the matter appear more real (as Mr. Swiveller remarked to the Marchioness), I invested a dollar (which I luckily had

tied up in the corner of my belt) in some tedge, and, each man bringing his share of dinner, we had a great ceremonious feast, with all the proper attendants, even to the waiter, who held up long strips of spongy teff-cake to be cut and eaten with the sword, in representation of raw beef.

Thus we passed a whole afternoon in a most agreeable manner, and by a little good temper and management I became a great favourite with the soldiery, instead of being bullied by them, as I should certainly have been had I conducted myself otherwise. Let this be a warning to hot-headed travellers. My greatest discomfort arose from my complaint, which had increased probably from good living at Cafta, and the nature of which rendered my confinement to the hut highly irksome. But this only served to draw out the good qualities of my comrades, who contrived for me all sorts of little necessary conveniences, and went about in search of medicines. They procured me some pungent root or other, which seemed to do me a great deal of good, so much so, that on the third day of my imprisonment I was quite well. About the same period one of my servants, who, though under surveillance, were allowed their freedom, left Cafta secretly during the night and went straight off to Dejatch Guangwoul, whose camp was about two days' journey distant, and represented me as a friend of Dejatch Oubi's sent by him to Sennár to procure him some guns. There was some demur about whether this lie was to be believed, and whether I ought not to be kept till the cessation of the rains should allow a

messenger to cross the Taccazy and inquire of Oubi. Luckily for me, one of Guangwoul's attendants had seen me frequently in company and intimate with his master's brother, Dejatch Shétou. This was told to the young prince, and it was also argued that Oubi, being determined on a war expedition immediately the dry season set in, would be angry with them, if by detaining me they should prevent the guns arriving in time; it happily ended in my servant being sent back and with him a soldier who bore a message to Lidge Hailo to liberate me instantly, treat me with the greatest possible kindness, and forward me on my way to the best of his power. These orders were obeyed to the letter. I really believe that Hailo is an excellent fellow, though his counsellor Wassan is a brute that deserves flaying. Hailo invited me at once to sup with him, and treated me with the utmost familiarity, seating me by him and pressing me to drink largely with him. As a mark of especial esteem he gave me a small stick, the end of which was crooked and cut into teeth like a comb, the use for which it was intended being to scratch one's own back. I never made out the exact motive of my detention, but suspect I may have been taken for one of the Greek silversmiths. After I had left him and returned to my old quarters at Cafta, he sent me a bountiful supply of food for my supper, and an azmàry or buffoon to cheer my evening. Next day a second supply was brought me, and a singing woman of great beauty and considerable talent accompanied it. I was by this time quite a lion, no longer a Turk, but a friend of the chief's,

and a most cultivable acquaintance; so I was visited by crowds of people all congratulating me on my liberation, and many bringing me presents of eatables. Very different this from the reception they gave me on my first arrival. I was entreated to remain through the rains, and then, if I must go, to take the way of Gondar, the route I had chosen being represented as full of dangers, partly from the fever, and partly from the fear and dread that Nimr's people have of a Turk. But the main object I had in undertaking this journey was to visit this same Nimr, not that I expected to see anything particularly curious or interesting in him or his people, but that it was a new and not very easy ronte, and these two motives are in general sufficient to tempt a traveller anywhere. So I prepared for a start by begging of my friend Hailo to procure me a camel or two, for hire, to carry my baggage. In the fulness of his good nature he ridiculed my notion of paying for them, declaring that he would take some Arabs and make them conduct me to my destination for nothing. I however refused this, pointing out not only the injustice of such a proceeding, but also the great imprudence of vexing them just before putting myself completely into their power.

During my stay at Cafta I made the acquaintance of two young men who like myself were prisoners in the camp, though not quite in durance, but under a sort of parole or surveillance which prevented their leaving the neighbourhood. They were Abou Bekr, one of Nimr's sons, and Adam Rajjab, younger brother of Emir. The two brothers are co-chiefs of a colony of Tokrouri, who

have a large settlement near Nimr's village. The word Tokrouri is generally applied to the wandering pilgrims who pass through these countries (*i. e.* Sennár, Abyssinia, &c.) on their way from the interior of Africa to Mecca. They are from a variety of countries, Darfour, Dar Borgou, Bornou, Bàgarima, Fellàta, &c. I have met with several who had seen white merchants, possibly Englishmen, near their homes on the west coast. They are supposed, especially the Fellàta, to be very clever in charms, medicine, &c., and by the aid of these accomplishments and of charity they get over their long journey pretty comfortably. They lodge in the mosque when in Mohammedan villages, and in general are rather esteemed among the people: occasionally they have been accused of thefts and of inciting the black soldiery in the Nubian provinces to revolt, but I should think there was a good deal of falsehood in this latter accusation. Their usual costume is simple enough, consisting of a long shirt and a skull-cap. They mostly travel in small parties of three or four, but occasionally you meet a large caravan of fifty to one hundred or even more, women, children, and all. They seldom carry arms, except knives, long staves, and clubs: their poverty is their chief safeguard, but they can fight, and well too, when obliged to defend themselves, and certainly a caravan which I once met in Abyssinia gave me that impression, being principally composed of fine hardy young men, with broad shoulders, long limbs, and small heads, very different both in features and frame from the inhabitants of the country in which they were travelling. At

another time a large body of them were attacked in Tigrè by some rebel brigands, and, though inferior both in numbers and arms to their assailants, they beat them off easily. The two that accompanied me were very different in character one from the other. Sàleh, the younger, was a very good-looking negro from Darfour, but (though the distinction will be unintelligible to my European readers) not at all of the slave cast of countenance. The other, Abd Allah, was I believe a runaway slave, though he professed himself a Saleyan (from Borgou), and got furiously irate if any one hinted to the contrary. Both were brave: Sàleh was of a sweet-tempered, open disposition, though passionate when roused; while Abd Allah was a great, bony, savage-looking animal, whose very laugh was more like that of a hyæna than of a man. He was a fierce eater, and would devour any amount of the most disgusting filth, provided no one saw him, or that he could prove it not to be strictly forbidden by the Koran. I believe that if it had not been for his religious scruples (and these I often suspected were only skin-deep) he would have eaten a man with as great pleasure as anything else. I must say that he proved himself to be devotedly attached to me, and would have done anything for me, but I suspect that for a dollar he would have cut the throat of almost any one else. In fighting he was so desperately savage that I was often quite afraid lest he should involve us in some bad business. He was invaluable in serious affrays, but a perfect nuisance in a town fight. I remember once, just before we left Adoua, we had a row

with some soldiers, the first in which I had ever seen him engage, and that was quite enough to satisfy me as to his pugnacity. It was just after the arrival of the camp at Enda Mariam. Many of my neighbours, knowing that the king's grass-cutters would come into the town and take any forage (teff-straw) they could find, brought a good deal into my yard for safety, trusting that my being a stranger would prevent the grass-cutters from robbing me. However it seems the slaves were not so politely disposed, for one day I was very quietly washing out my rifle in the inner court, when I was astonished by the apparition of a human head over the low wall which separated us from the next house; then another rose, and another, till the top of the wall was fringed with my uninvited visitors, who without taking any notice whatever of my presence began coolly to survey my premises and make their plans for carrying off the heap of straw. Obeying a natural impulse, I used my rifle-barrel over them as a gardener does a syringe, by discharging a stream of blackish water through the nipple into their faces, beginning at the man nearest to me and carrying it down the line. Not knowing what to make of this extraordinary phenomenon, they fell back at once, but one of the party, who must have been a wag, suggested that fear frequently produced a similar effect on some people; so they all reappeared. Meanwhile some six or eight of my Abyssinians who happened to be about, and the two Tokrouris, had joined me, and we were engaged in a parley with our besiegers, when some one called from the roof of a neighbouring house that a detachment

was endeavouring to scale the wall of the outer court from the street, and so take us in the rear. I immediately went to the spot and found that one man had actually got over and the others were following. On my going up to the first he looked inclined to retreat, saying at the same time, "Now you let me alone! hit one of your own size," or something of the sort. I assured him in the most civil manner that I had no such hostile intention, but merely requested him to return by the way he came, offering even to give him a leg over the wall. Abyssinians are so much used to begin their quarrels and get up their courage by blustering and dispute, that they don't know at all what to do when a man receives them with a smile and a joke; it seems completely to frighten them. So I kept guard and conversed with the three or four assailants of the outer wall in a most agreeable manner to both of us, till a sudden noise from the inner court caused us to leave the spot. I hastened across the court to my people, who were fighting, while my new friends ran round by the street to join their comrades. The inner court presented a glorious spectacle, for, neither party having any spears or other more dangerous weapons than clubs, they were not afraid of hurting one another. I had just time to see three or four men go over, and to remark to them that "crutches are cheap," but no more, for I was met by a huge Galla, who came rushing at me with a knotty club formed of the stump and root of the àgam. In pure self-defence I caught his right hand with my left and "countered" him under the left eye. In one respect

the consequences were natural, for he went over like a shot, but, as I afterwards saw, the blow took a most peculiar effect on his skin, for, instead of causing a healthy black eye, it raised a lump like an egg just on the crown of the cheek-bone, at the same time taking the skin off. The poor fellow did not at all appreciate this mode of action: he had seen me unarmed and made his onslaught, then suddenly found himself on the ground, What weapon could I have used? Medicine no doubt; so he did not even take the trouble to get up, but crawled on all fours to the nearest wall, where he squatted down crying like a child, and blubbering out, "I was at the battle of Belliss and the Barea campaign; I fought the Bògos ,&c." (enumerating all his actions); "and now I am going to die the death of a dog in a Copt's house in Adoua!" He thought for certain I had employed some magic or other mysterious means, and that he must certainly die. But by this time the fight was over. My people, though not half as numerous as the others, had fought like men, while Abd Allah, the Tokrouri, had fought like a devil.

At the first onset he had seized upon a huge pestle used for pounding peas in the hollowed trunk of a tree; it was five feet long, and a good deal thicker than most men's arms. Swinging this round his head, he rushed into the thickest of the fray, hitting out blindly at everything and everybody he met, and knocking down all who opposed him. The whole affair did not last a minute, and then we had a good laugh at the vanquished; two poor fellows were lying on the ground in anything but a laughing plight, but the subjects of our

mirth were two or three who had hidden themselves in the room occupied by the maid-servants, as many more whom we found squatted down in the kitchen, and my unhappy assailant; the rest had got off by the way they came. We raised the fallen men, and reassured the mind of the hero with the damaged eye. But the most serious part of the business was to come; some of the party had got badly hurt, and all vowed vengeance on Abd Allah as the chief damager. Knowing that a complaint would be laid before Oubi, I got on my mule at once and rode to his son Shétou, told him all that had taken place, and that, as I had a lame horse of his in my stables, he might easily get us off. So he sent a soldier with me to my "balderabba" or agent at Oubi's camp, declaring that the straw was for his horse (which fact I was luckily not questioned upon), and that I had cautioned the slaves to that effect, which was partly true, for I had told them that Shétou's horse was there, but they would not believe me. The "balderabba" promised that if any notice of it were taken he would see that all was properly explained to Oubi. On my return home the first thing that I saw was Abd Allah stamping about the outer court in a fury, and a crowd of persons, among whom were my own servants and our former enemies, collected in a corner, some seated, some standing. Approaching, I found that two or three soldiers of distinction, friends of mine, coming from the camp, had been met by our vanquished foemen, and requested to judge in the matter. Our accusers having indicated the Tokrouri by the title of "Barea" (the slave, one of

the only words of the Abyssinian language that he understood) had caused him to get into his present rage; and he was stamping and foaming like a madman, and stripping off his clothes, calling on any three of them to fight him with any weapon they pleased, while his comrade Sàleh was vainly endeavouring to pacify him. However, as no one whom he addressed understood Arabic, he was totally unheeded till his fit of rage wore off. I found the grass-cutters, trusting to the presence of the Amhàra chiefs, holding their heads very high, and swearing that Oubi should hear of it, and that we should all be punished severely. I answered them that they had better go at once, as else the prince might choose to send for them, at the same time relating what I had done at the camp, and, as a further proof, ordering Shétou's horse to be led out. He being recognized by many present, they got into a dreadful state of alarm, fearing lest their zeal in their master's service should be rewarded by a taste of the plough-whip on their return home. After a bit I consoled them by telling them that Oubi should know nothing of the matter, and then, ordering a few jars of tedge, we all drank together and parted the very best of friends. I must own that I am disappointed in the above story now that it is written; I thought it would have referred more to the Tokrouri than it does; in the faint impression of the event on my memory he was decidedly the most *striking* character.

But we began by talking of Adam Rajjab, the young chief, and thence were proceeding to his people. Many of these pilgrims, getting tired of their long journeyings,

or liking the country, have settled down on the frontiers, between Abyssinia and the neighbouring provinces of Sennár. They first settled at Metemma and Gellabat, where they increased gradually by the droppers off from caravans, till they became a considerable tribe. The Dar Saleyans at first were the most numerous of any in this heterogeneous colony, and elected from among themselves chiefs for all the rest: this did not please the people from Darfour, who consider the Saleyans as their natural enemies, the two countries having been at war from time immemorial, till Borgou was lately conquered by the Sultan Hussein, King of Darfour. Increasing in numbers, the Darfouris of Metemma revolted, and beat the Saleyans, who, with their chief Othman ebn Abd el Ràzig (son of "the Slave of the Giver of Fortune") fled to a place called Ai Ai, near Cafta, where they now remain. Othman is dead, and his two sons Emir and Adam rule conjointly in his stead. The tribe is usually called "The children of Othman." The victors remained at Metemma, and their chief, or "Mek," Merri, ruled there till he was killed by the Abyssinian Dejasmatch Coumfou. I made great friends with Adam and Abou Bekr, Nimr's son, more especially with the latter, partly because, as I was going to visit his father, it was my interest to do so, and partly because he was by far the better fellow of the two. I forgot to say that the two young men are kept as securities for the payment of some defalcation in the tribute owed by their respective tribes to Dejatch Guangwoul, the country where they have settled being Abyssinian territory, though beyond the inhabited frontier.

CHAPTER XL.

JOURNEY TO SOUFI.

THE second day after my liberation, three camels, which Hailo had engaged for me, were brought to my dwelling. Their owners appeared surly-mannered, taciturn fellows, but, judging that this proceeded from their not feeling altogether safe from extortion as long as they were in Abyssinian hands, I entered into conversation with them, and, after opening their hearts with a good supper, led them on by sympathizing with them in their matters of tribute-money, &c., on the one hand, and lauding their patriotic chieftain on the other, till I got them to be quite communicative. Abou Bekr, too, had spoken well of me, and sent a message to his brother Omar (or, as it is here pronounced, Immer), telling him that we were friends, and that I had given him something to assist him in his troubles, which I had done, though in a very small way.

We started at about ten o'clock next morning, and, after a rough ride across a hilly and well-wooded district, descended by a very picturesque, but by no means commodious path, into the plain country, which

exactly resembles; or rather is a continuation of, the mazzaga that we had crossed some days before. In many places the guides pointed out to us the bones of persons who had been butchered by the Bâza, and in one deep and long ravine they cautioned us to dismount, and walk every man with his weapons prepared in his hands. However, we met with no molestation or adventure of any kind, and, after a halt, arrived at a village inhabited by Abyssinian Mohammedans, who are called by their Arab co-religionists Jibberti. Soon after this, the rain, coming down heavily, kept us comfortably cool till half past seven, when we arrived at our destination.

By the way, I have told how we slept in the mud, so I may as well tell also how we managed to keep our clothes dry when travelling in the rain; this was rather an important consideration, seeing that each man's wardrobe, great or small, consisted of what he carried on his back. Some of my readers may like to try the plan in England. They would have plenty of opportunities, for we are blessed with a superabundance of rainy days. Our method was at once effective and simple: if halting, we took off our clothes, and sat upon them; if riding, they were placed under the leathern shabraque of the mule's saddle, or under any article of similar material, bag, or bed that lay on the camel's pack. A good shower-bath did none of us any harm, and as soon as the rain was over, and the moisture on our skins had evaporated, we had our garments as dry, warm, and comfortable as if they had been before a fire. But lest any of my readers should deem that we

were not over careful of appearances, I must state that when in populous districts we kept our drawers on, or supplied their place with a piece of rag or a skin, and then when the rain was over we wrapped ourselves up in our "quarry," and, taking off the wetted articles, hung them over the animals' cruppers to dry.

And thus travelling on we arrived at Nimr's retreat, which is situated near the summit of a hill: the principal village, called Mai Gova, from a brook which flows near it, lies in the plain below, and there are one or two small hamlets in the neighbourhood. The people about the chief told me that he had chosen that spot for his residence on account of its being more healthy and less muddy than the low flat country. This is a very plausible reason; but I should fancy that there was also some idea of its position being less open to a surprise by the Turks, especially as the hamlets seem to be placed most conveniently as outposts whence messengers could carry the news of any approach of danger to those living in the principal village or with the Mek. But I have been going on talking about Nimr by his name, or by his title of "the Mek," just as if all my readers were personally acquainted with him. Some of them, indeed, may have heard his history, for he took a leading part in the defence of his country against the invading Turks. The word Nimr means "the leopard," and by this sobriquet the chief is invariably called; Mek is a corruption of "Melek," and signifies king or prince. Literally I should think "possessor" would be the word. "Milk" (a possession) and "Mamlouk" (a

slave or possessed) seem to be derived from the same root. Formerly, before the occupation by the Turks, the various provinces of Nubia were governed each by its own "Mek" or king, who, according to circumstances, was at times tributary to the King of Sennar, at others independent. Nimr was prince of the Jàlyn, who occupied the country about Shendy and Metemma on the Nile, S.E. of Dongola. The other Metemma, of which we have spoken as the village of the Darfouri colony, is on the N.W. frontier of Abyssinia between Gondar and Sennar. The cause of Nimr's leaving his home and taking refuge in this desert spot, under the protection of Abyssinia, was as follows:—Ismaël Pacha, son of Mohammed Ali (the celebrated Viceroy of Egypt), had conquered all the Nubian provinces along the Nile. He came to Nimr's residence and began to bully him, as he had done all the other chiefs; among other things demanding immediate supplies of every kind of article he could think of, one thousand of each sort. Among these were a thousand camels; so Nimr prepared for their reception by collecting together a similar number of loads of millet-straw for provender, which were deposited in the yard and about the hut where the Pacha lodged. Nimr meanwhile appeared unusually cheerful and polite to his guest, notwithstanding that he was threatened with the bastinado and other punishments if the supplies were not forthcoming in an impossibly short time. He promised to do his best, brought beer and food in profusion, and Ismaël, having eaten as much as he could, and drunk more than was

good for him, slept with that sort of heavy sleep usually attributed to owners of clean consciences. During the night the straw was piled round his hut and fired, the door being fastened outside to prevent his escape, and he was burnt to death with three white slaves who slept with him. It is said that his body was scarcely singed, for his slaves, when they saw the danger, had lain over him, and, though they were reduced to cinders, he must have died of suffocation only. He had left his troops behind him, and the few personal attendants that accompanied him were surprised and killed by the Arabs as soon as their master's funeral pile was kindled. This is a rough sketch of the occurrence, which was the signal for the revolt of the whole of Nubia and Sennar. (I cannot find room to say any more on the subject here, though I collected the fullest particulars not only of these conquests, but of the general history of Nubia, Sennar, and Kordofan. They will form a work of themselves, if I should ever fancy that the perusal of it would be interesting to the English public.) Mohammed Ali, immediately on hearing the news, despatched Mohammed Bey, the "Defterdar," with an army, to punish the rebels and take vengeance on the murderers of his son. The Bey arrived at Shendy after a long and circuitous route, and after having most barbarously treated the people of the country he passed through, but found that Nimr had taken himself off with many of his people to a safe place.

The Defterdar amused himself for a time by maiming some, killing others, and sending the best-looking of

the young people off to Egypt for slaves. Among other atrocities he collected nearly the whole population of a village into a sort of penfold, and, having packed them well with combustibles, burnt them alive. Nimr and his people fled first to Hallenga, then to the Hamran, thence to Soufy, afterwards to Gellabat, and at last settled down in their present situation.

We alighted before a hut constructed purposely for the reception of strangers, and attached to the dwelling of Immer, the chief's eldest surviving son, who, on account of his father's advanced age and blindness, takes the active part of the chieftainship in his stead. Mohammed, his elder brother, had died a few days before our arrival. We found the guest's lodging in a perfect state of repair, and well furnished, though simply constructed of sticks and straw. Its furniture consisted only of two or three rough stretchers, as many native tanned hides for couches, a large fire blazing in the centre of the hut, a heap of wood ready to supply it, and a jar filled with water. We entered it with more feelings of satisfaction and comfort than ever a wearied traveller in England experienced on entering a first-rate hotel. We were cold, wet, and tired, and, more than all, unaccustomed to such a reception; even the Abyssinian servant who accompanied me acknowledged that this was better than the doings of his own country. Now, the reason why I say that this sort of lodging is far more comfortable than an English hotel, or even the best private house in Europe, is, that on entering the latter, though everything is luxurious, nothing is handy;

every little comfort you need requires a sort of labour to obtain it. If you arrive wet and tired in the hut of a savage, all that you do is to cast off in an instant the whole, or what part of your very scanty clothing you may think fit. In general you wrap yourself up in a cotton cloth or piece of leather, and squat or lounge over the wood fire, holding up the bottom edge of your garment so as to warm your body thoroughly from underneath. Food is brought you, of a simple kind but quite wholesome, and enough to satisfy your hunger. Supper certainly produces a most agreeable sensation in the body and mind of a hungry man, and you squat in enjoyment of it and your pipe till your eyes begin gradually to close, your head to nod, and at last, without any pre-determination on your part, your pipe falls from your hand, and you drop off, with all your comfortable sensations, into a most delicious sleep. On the other hand, in England, you must first of all go into a cold bed-room and change your clothes, which, from the ingeniously-complicated fashion of them, implies at the very least half an hour's labour, especially if wet. You then descend to your sitting-room, and, perched on a queer sort of instrument of torture called a chair, try to fancy yourself comfortable in the contemplation of a black-looking grate, containing in all probability an equally sombre, just lighted mass of coal, with a little flickering flame, a great deal of smoke, and no warmth whatever. Supper comes in—truly a very good supper, to make use of a conventional expression—which to me implies sundry portions of good wholesome food that

have been totally disguised, and rendered as unwholesome as possible. Supper over, if you should wish to smoke you must go out of doors, or to the smoking-room. By degrees you get comfortably sleepy over your pipe; you must get up, return to your cold bed-room, occupy half an hour in undressing, and then get into a cold bed, before you can indulge in your very natural inclination. Now the change of atmosphere, and the refreshing sensation of cool linen, are not at all friends to Morpheus, and it may be hours before your sleep comes as naturally as it did over the fire. Perhaps you are indulged in a feather-bed; if so, you must be a hardy fellow if you close your eyes at all. So now, let no one for the future deem it singular that a man should like what in England is erroneously called "a rough life;" I trust I have proved it to be by far the most luxurious. But I must remember that "different people have different opinions," and that what is luxury to one is hardship to another. I know that the sort of life that I speak of as enjoyable is considered by some as unintellectual and unrefined. I own, with sorrow and contrition, to a decided preference for green trees over smoky chimneys—to loving fine scenery, and not caring for the contemplation of the last Paris fashions in Hyde Park—to enjoying the warbling of birds in a wild forest glade, fully as much as the performance of the best opera in a crowded house—and a stroll by moonlight more than a ball—

"Ove mefitici miasmi esala
Una caldaja chiamata Sala."

Some of my fair readers may vote me "an animal;" I fear I must plead guilty to such indictment. But as I have begun my confession I may as well make a clean shrift of it, and own that one of the great physical pleasures to be derived from "a hard life" (as it is called) is the enjoyment of that low, vulgar sensation, common to the inferior orders of the animal creation, but seemingly not much appreciated by refined men—the feeling which inspires a calf to cock his tail, shake his head, kick and gallop about—which swells a pigmy into a Hercules, and causes a young hippopotamus to think of adopting the ballet as his profession—I mean, the enjoyment of exuberant animal spirits not dependent on temporary excitement, but the offspring of abstemious habits, combined with plenty of air and exercise.

To return to Mai Gova. Scarcely had we seated ourselves comfortably round the fire, when our host Immer entered, and welcomed us with the greatest politeness. I talked with him for some time, and found him very agreeable and entertaining. He expressed a hope that we should remain a few days with them, and that we should not hesitate in applying to him for whatever we might require. While he was yet with us, a slave brought in coffee, a few small cakes of bread, and some grilled bones, which he tasted with us. This slight meal only served to increase our appetite; and when he rose to leave us, and we had waited for some time without any further supply, we began to grumble, voting that, though his hospitable expressions were in themselves a treat to the ears, they had not

solid weight enough to descend into the stomach. However, these unjust suspicions were in a few minutes proved to be only the result of ignorance on our part, not only of the character of our host, but of the customs of his country. The mouthful we had eaten with him was a ceremony, a breaking of bread together, and an excellent custom as a preparative for a heavier meal, the appearance of which very soon after gladdened our hearts. The approach of food is always agreeable to a hungry man, even if introduced by a formal "Yes Sir"-ing, "Coming Sir"-ing, napkin-carrying waiter; how much more so then, if, as ours did, it should appear borne on the heads of three of the most beautiful mulatto slave-girls that ever girded a rahat!* One of them bore a bowl of new milk enough for ten persons. She presented it to me; I tasted it. It was nectar! and she was Hebe! But no juice of the treacherous vine was ever half as sweet as that milk; and as for Hebe, I think she ought to consider herself highly flattered that even for a moment I should have mistaken such a beauty for her. She was, like many girls of these countries, and especially of her particular race, a perfect model of form, of exquisitely delicate features, and in complexion of a warm rich nut-brown. I am ashamed to own that my contemplation of her beauties did not occupy me half so much time as my description of them, for I turned an impassioned glance—not at her companions, though both were beautiful, one even

* A fringe of thin leather shreds worn round the loins, the whole indoor costume of an unmarried girl in Nubia.

quite her equal—but at the objects they carried. I found these to be a large "gaddah," a wooden bowl, containing a pile of "rahif," or *thin* cakes of millet and wheat, and a vessel containing "melàh." The rahif cakes are so called because made but little thicker than paper. The melàh is the standing dish of Nubia; it is composed of a number of ingredients, of which meat dried and pounded is one; but the principal is bàmya, a vegetable pod well known in Egypt and Nubia, of a mucilaginous nature. The melàh is of about the consistency of hasty pudding, and partakes of the property of the bâmya to such an extent, that when eating it with the bread you are occasionally obliged to clear your fingers, which become webbed like a duck's foot with the stringy preparation. Nevertheless, it is a dish that, like many others of these countries, a man may taste every day of his life, and never get tired of; at least so the natives find, and my own experience of several years induces me to think the same. We supped, then turned in, and slept soundly. Next morning we were awakened by the entrance of a slave bringing us two sheep; one a present from the old chief, the other from his son. Our breakfast shortly followed, and after concluding this important meal we started to pay a visit to the Mek, whose hut was a few hundred yards distant. We found him seated on a mat near the entrance, twiddling a rosary for a *passetemps*. I was disappointed in his appearance: judging from all that I had heard of his deeds and character, I expected

a physiognomy something like that of the repentant gentleman in Paradise and the Peri,—

> "Sullenly fierce—a mixture dire,
> Like thunder-clouds, of gloom and fire!
> In which the Peri's eye could read
> Dark tales of many a ruthless deed;
> The ruin'd maid—the shrine profaned—
> Oaths broken—and the threshold stain'd
> With blood of guests!"

But Nimr was not at all like that gentleman—oh dear, no! Murderer, outlaw, as he is called, and brigand (as I suspect he frequently is, after an honourable fashion), "the Leopard" appeared to us in the shape of a good-natured looking old granddad, with a bald pate and comfortable rotundity. He is very fair, being but little darker than an Egyptian, and has a most benevolent expression of countenance, over which, however, one may occasionally detect the passage of a cloud, probably occasioned by the loss of his eyesight or of his home. He received us with much kindness of manner; coffee and bread were handed round, and I remained for some time chatting with him. The bread was in small cakes half an inch thick, called "gourasa," which were broken into small pieces and a morsel given to each person present. This was the repetition of the hospitable custom I have before alluded to. To have eaten bread and salt together is an expression in Arabia tantamount to being friends, and no man need fear treachery on the part of a true Arab who has thus offered him these tokens of welcome. The poor old chief seemed to feel deeply the false character he bore

among people who were unacquainted with him, and once or twice alluded to it rather bitterly, asking me how I had dared to thrust myself into the Leopard's den, or trust my life and property to the hands of such a set of villains as himself and people. I of course replied in a suitable manner, that it could be only a fool who would believe that treachery or crime could exist in the heart of a man who would sacrifice himself as he had done for the good of his country. In reply to his question, as to what was my motive for visiting him, I told him the truth, that it was pure curiosity; that I was a man who, from my boyhood, had wandered in various parts of the world for the sake of seeing all that was worth seeing, and gaining experience; that, having heard tell of him and his story far and wide, I had longed to see him and make friends with him. He appeared in deep thought during the whole conversation, only putting his questions and, muttering in an absent manner, "You are right, you are right!" to each of my replies. He asked me how he was to know that I was not a Turkish spy. I answered that I had never thought of that matter at all, and moreover that I expected the Turks could easily enough find a dark man to send in that capacity, if they wanted one, without risking a white. He very civilly told me that my voice was enough for him, it being that of an honest man. I held my tongue, though I own to feeling that this was but a poor compliment, for, from a bit of a cold I had caught, its honest tone was not at all common to me, being the effect of hoarseness. Immer, who

was present, also was good enough to say that he would vouch for me with his life, though he had only just made my acquaintance. But they both cautioned me much against wandering about in the large village unattended by any of their people, for they said that they had many bad people among them, not belonging to their tribe, but strangers and malefactors who had fled to them for refuge, and that I should certainly be in danger from their suspicions. He seemed quite pleased that I had come to see him, and once or twice said, "You'll tell the world that after all you did not find us so very bad as some men think." He spoke of his exile, and expressed his longing to return to Shendy. A former Pacha had offered him peace, but he feared to accept it, knowing that on many former occasions, when the Turks had found all other means to fail, they had adopted the treacherous one of holding out false promises as a bait to allure their victims to the scaffold. Immer afterwards asked me to use any influence I might gain among the Turkish authorities at Khartoum or in Egypt in procuring for them a paper of "amàn" or protection. We left the old man, promising to see him again before our final departure.

The Jàlyn colony here seems to have adopted the costume of the Bedouin tribes around them, wearing their hair bushy or tressed, instead of shaving the head and covering it with a skull-cap like their brethren of the Nile. Their dress is the "ferda" or cotton cloth of the Nubian provinces, which, in shape and the fashion of wearing it, nearly resembles a Highlander's plaid,

being longer and narrower than the Abyssinian "quarry." Our principal companions, besides the young chief, were his scribe, a young man bearing the promising name of "el Tayib" (the good man), and one or two strangers from the Hamran Arabs. Of these latter one was called Mohammed es Sherif: he was the pink of perfection of an Arab dandy; his hair was remarkably long and bushy, beautifully arranged, and made completely yellow with a coating of bees' wax. His clothes and even his manners betrayed much care of outward appearance. He was indeed a handsome man; I don't mean of course the style of beauty that would be admired in an English drawing-room; his hair was black, it is true (that is, if minus the bees' wax), but it was not by any means silky; his eyes were dark, but they were neither soft, languishing, nor upturning in their expression; on the contrary, he had a peculiar way of looking at you from under his eyebrows, while his eyes flashed fire instead of sentiment; his teeth were beautiful; his nose aquiline; and chin prominent. Good nature and ferocity were strongly marked in his countenance, a combination often met with in the character of a savage, however incompatible such a mixture may appear to a European. In fact, had he been as great a man as Cyrus, he would probably have been as valuable a friend and as dangerous an enemy as he was.

While on the subject of personal beauty, I may as well give a recipe for making pommade which I saw practised among our friends here. I feel persuaded

that, in recommending this article, I can conscientiously warrant it to be free from all deleterious mineral substances. "Do you want luxuriant hair, whiskers, &c.?" Try my pommade! Miss Emily Dean asserts that her "Crinilene" is the only preparation that ladies and gentlemen can rely on "for the production of whiskers, mustachios, eyebrows, &c., in three or four weeks with certainty." I take up the gauntlet of defiance she has cast down, and let her own sex, let the ladies of England, decide between the merits of her "Crinilene" and my "shepe fatine." Let any lady try her preparation on one side of her face, and mine on the other, and see which produces the best "whiskers, mustachios, &c." My pommade costs little but the trouble of making, but this is an essential point; it is of no use to any one but the maker of it, but then its manufacture is not a disagreeable process, as all will be able to judge. We had just killed one of our sheep, and were cutting it up, when an Arab came and asked me for a lump of fat. I gave it to him, and he at once popped it into his mouth, raw as it was, and began to chew it. I thought this a rather queer taste, but what with being busy butchering, and having seen and tried so many strange things as food during the last few years, I took no notice of it at the moment, and the man walked away. Half an hour after I was sitting smoking at the hut door, when our friend returned and squatted alongside of me still chawing. "What on earth have you got now?" said I. "Oh, it's not quite done yet," he answered, pulling out the fat, and quickly returning it

to his mouth. I didn't like to show my ignorance, and so merely said "No?" with as critical a look as I could assume. The mysterious mastication had, however, excited my curiosity, so I watched the man's proceedings. After another half-hour he pulled it out again; it was as soft as butter, and pure white; he looked at it with a satisfied air, and, exclaiming "It's done now!" handed it to our dandy friend Mohammed, and, seating himself on the ground before him, offered his head, which had previously been well combed and arranged with a bit of stick, to be beautified. The Sherif took the pommade, and, dabbing it lightly and carefully over his friend's bushy wig, stayed not his hand till, instead of black wool, he had given it the appearance of a heap of well-carded cotton.

The same afternoon, when we went to fetch up the mules which had been turned out to pasture as usual, they were not to be found, nor could we trace the direction they had taken: we sought them everywhere without success, and returned towards nightfall rather uncomfortable in our minds from the knowledge that the neighbourhood is full of wild beasts. I went at once to Immer and told him of our loss; he replied by inviting me to stay and sup with him, at the same time desiring El Tayib to write a powerful charm, which he assured me would not only protect them from all harm, but also lead them back to us by morning. When a savage tells me that I need not fear, I never do, nor even give myself the trouble to think over his opinion, but adopt it at once, so I sat down and talked with him

on general subjects till supper time. He seems to have borrowed from the Abyssinians a good many of their best points. In his house he evidently affected the Abyssinian chief, and he did so to great advantage, combining the lightness of that people with the warmth and sincerity of the Arab. Among the other usual dishes we had the grilled bones with Cayenne pepper again. This time the object of their introduction was made manifest by the appearance, shortly after, of a large jar of tedge, *à l'Abyssinienne*. We sat for a long time, and, increasing in friendship one towards the other, formed many grand plans for expeditions against the neighbouring tribes; for fortifying the hill on which the village stood, and thus rendering it a place of refuge for the villages of the plain; and a variety of other castles in the air, I forgetting all the while that my sojourn in the place was only to extend over a very few days more. This reflection at last coming over us, Immer at once was for knocking it on the head by tempting me to stay at least through the remainder of the wet season, and proposed that during that time we should deliberate over a more lengthened, if not a total residence with them. I have had many similar proposals in various places where I have been well received, but, with the exception of Rohabaita, I never before felt such an inclination to comply with them. Immer's notion of tempting was by the offer of the best of his slaves, and other minor attractions. The hobby which might have carried me was of a very different stamp. I had wild schemes of conquering the Bàza and making myself chief of their country. I

thought that by residing alternately in Addy Abo, and with Nimr's people, I might eventually gain considerable influence with both. If I could obtain a government of any size in the former neighbourhood, and secure Immer's friendship, we might act together, one on each side of the hated tribe; and with the aid of European ideas, European weapons, and European dollars, the scheme was not altogether so impracticable as it might seem, for by proper diplomacy I could have obtained the support of the Abyssinians on the one side and of the Turco-Egyptian government on the other. Well, all these visions of dominion have ended in my being monarch of a very limited number of quadrupeds, and as for glory! I get occasionally upset into a manure heap by an unruly bull-calf, without even the local papers taking any notice of it. "*Sic transit gloria mundi!*"

Next day being Sunday we remained where we were. Many Mohammedans object to travelling on that day, possibly from a traditional remnant of the Christian practices of their forefathers, though they neither recognise nor remember it as such, merely believing it to be an unlucky day for starting on a journey. In Arabic Sunday is called "el Hàd," or the first, and so on through all the other days, with the exception of Friday, which, as their day of rest and prayer, is called "El Jumàh," or the assembling. Here they have retained the Jewish numbering, though, in speaking of weeks, they say so many "Jumàh," thus evidently considering Friday as their starting-point. We have adopted

into common use a somewhat similar error by calling Sunday "the Sabbath." The Jews called their day of rest by that name, because it was the *seventh* of the week, which I believe is the sole meaning of the word.

Starting early in search of the mules, we were much pleased to find them quietly grazing within a few hundred yards of the village. Of course we all attributed their return to the wonderful agency of the charm which Immer had caused to be written. It is certain that he himself expressed the greatest confidence in its success. It may have been that they wandered back of their own accord, or perhaps that he suspected them to have been stolen by some of the hopeful people of the lower village, and had written to his brother to order their restoration. I only relate the facts as they occurred, without hazarding an opinion on the subject. My poor horse, Dejatch Shétou's gift, had borne the journey very badly. The moisture of the low lands had so completely softened his hoofs, that, on ascending the rocky hills near Quollita, the once almost ungovernable animal had limped along with difficulty, and before reaching Mai Gova we had to take off his saddle and trappings and drive him before us. Want of food, he having been often reduced to what he could pick up by the road-side, had also much lowered him in condition. As I was attached to him for his donor's sake, I did not like to see him start on a long journey in such bad trim, so, knowing that he would gain by the exchange, and that I should travel lighter without him,

I left him with Immer as a remembrance. Some months after I heard that he had recovered his former condition and strength, and was in great favour with his master. Another Sunday passed and found us still at Mai Gova, our journey having been put off, day after day, on some willingly invented excuse, but, feeling that we must go sooner or later, on Monday morning we started, camels and a guide having been procured for us by the young chief. At parting he gave me a sword and an amulet, which was to protect me from all the dangers of an African forest journey. He also pressed upon me a shirt of chain mail of considerable value, but this I absolutely refused.

At about ten o'clock, after descending the hill on which the village of Nimr is built, we arrived at Mai Gova, and entered the house of one of our camel-men, who begged us to remain there a short time while he made some preparations for the journey. The village, which contains probably 1500 to 2000 inhabitants, is situated in the midst of cultivated fields, near the edge of the plain. The houses are some square, and built of mud, some round, conical roofed, and constructed simply of a framework of poles, filled in with boughs, and thatched. Nearly all the dwellings have a "rakouba" or light shed similar to the "dass" of Tigrè, as a retreat in the hot weather. After we had waited for some hours the master of the house returned, and we hoped to have got clear off, but on arriving in the village we were again detained for a considerable time by the seizure of one of our new attendants for the payment of a small

sum of money. This caused a dispute between him and his creditor, which lasted above an hour, and collected a crowd about us. I never saw a more ill-looking set of fellows. They were a mixture of niggers from every part of the country, runaway slaves, deserters from the black regiments in the Egyptian service, and escaped malefactors of all sorts. A wretched old black fâky (or priest) had the coolness to remark that I was a spy, and that it was imprudent to let me go. A Jàly answered that I was not a Turk, but a Christian Frank, coming from their friends the Abyssinians, and recommended by them. The fanatic nigger, spitting in disgust on the ground, declared that this made matters worse, and that he believed me not only to be a kâfir (infidel) but also a spy, for he knew that the Franks were the slaves of the Sultan of Stamboul. The discussion, almost amounting to a trial, became at last quite general. The camel-men having gone off about their comrade's business, and my people being with the baggage, which was not to be trusted to the fingers of the motley population, I was left alone, seated on a mule, in the midst of my self-constituted judges. I knew that there was no danger to be anticipated from the results of the dispute, feeling perfect confidence in the protection of the chief and the good faith of his own people; what gave me most uneasiness was the possibility of one of the blacks giving me a taste of cold iron from behind. Maddened by fanaticism and the heat of the argument, already many of them made faces at me and execrated me. I cannot say that I ever liked the feeling of an

enemy behind me: even now-a-days a cur snapping at my heels, and running away when I turn round, is one of my greatest abhorrences. But here I was obliged to submit to the *désagrément*, for I had them on all sides of me, and to retire would not have been prudent or manly, so I had nothing to do but to sit still, and, with my eyes well open, look as unconcerned as possible. I learnt a good deal of Mohammedan theology on this occasion. The Arabs argued that the person of a man who had eaten and lodged with their chief was sacred to them—the blacks, that a spy and Christian ought to be safe nowhere. The Jàly orator, who also was a "fâky," quoted the book to prove that, bigoted as they were, the blacks did not understand the precepts of their Prophet, nor the meaning of the word "káfir," which he showed could only be applied with justice to heathens, who do not acknowledge the existence of one Supreme Being, or who had not received a testament from Him by the mouths of his prophets. The Jews and Christians were therefore unjustly treated as infidels, Moses and Christ being both acknowledged by Mohammed as divinely inspired prophets. Young Nimr (son and namesake of the Mek), coming up with the camel-men, who had appealed to him, put a stop to this unpleasant dispute. I asked him if he believed the story of the debt to be true, or, as I suspected, an invention to induce me to advance some money besides the "arboun," * which

* The "arboun" is a sort of pledge, which, being paid down as soon as an agreement is made, renders it binding. The French have a similar custom, and I believe in some parts of England it is known, but forget under what name (? *earnest money*).

the man had already received. He answered that he did not know, but that, if the man did not choose to go, he could easily find a substitute; this seemed to settle the matter, for the creditor agreed upon the man's finding securities for his return and the payment of the sum demanded, and at length we got away: for my part I was not sorry to be once more in the woods. A Syrian joined us just as we were leaving the town, and accompanied us part of the way, for the pleasure, as he said, of holding some conversation with a man of his own colour. He told me that he had been a sergeant in the 8th regiment of Nizam or regular infantry, now stationed near El Khartoum; that, having killed a soldier of the Maghrebin (Moorish) irregular cavalry, he had deserted, and made his escape to this place. He said that he felt very lonely and uncomfortable in his present situation, among a people so dissimilar to him in tastes and habits as the population of Mai Gova, and that he longed to return to his country if he could get there without passing through Egypt. I suggested to him to pass through Abyssinia and Arabia, giving him directions and advice about the journey. The conversation ended by his begging a trifle from me, probably his sole motive for accompanying us, but he did it in so neat and gentlemanly a manner that I could not refuse him.

Owing to all these detentions, it was past four o'clock before we reached the hamlet of Màharish, which is the residence of another of the old Mek's numerous sons, a fine, tall, young man of the name of Sàad. He

welcomed us most cordially, especially after receiving from the guide Immer's message, desiring him to look upon me as his brother, and treat me as such. He would not even be dissuaded from waiting on me himself, and preparing my couch and food with his own hands. Judging from the emaciated appearance of most of them, the whole population, old and young, seemed to have suffered from ague, which, at this time of the year, is very prevalent in low situations. Many pretty children were lounging about, reduced by the fever to living skeletons with big bellies. This latter peculiarity is caused by an enlargement of the spleen (?), which is here called "Jenna el Wirda" (offspring of the ague), and in these countries almost invariably follows that disagreeable malady. Next morning we started before sunrise. Our way lying between Scylla and Charybdis, the Barea on our right and Tokrouri on our left, the guide requested us to walk as much as possible, and to carry our weapons ready for immediate use. The walking part of the business was imperative from the nature of the ground, for after the first few hours we had to pass through dense jungles in some places, and in others over bogs which took the mules up to their knees, even without their riders. We met with a good deal of game, got well up to a herd of buffaloes in the fore part of the day, and during the afternoon saw another larger herd, which, however, did not allow us to approach it within shooting distance. We also saw many antelopes, and a number of giraffes, whose long necks, acting as observatories, gave them due notice of our coming. Next day

about noon we were riding comfortably along, the road being both clearer and sounder than before, when all of a sudden the young mule on which I was mounted snorted loudly and shied back so abruptly that I was nearly unseated, and the contents of my newly-filled pipe were scattered on the ground. At the same moment one of the Tokrouris (who, having taken an outside place on the leading camel, was immediately behind me) called out, "The lions! there they go!" I scrambled up the camel's side in order to get a peep at them over the tops of the bushes through which we were passing, at the same time calling for a gun. The lions, sure enough, were scampering, or rather bounding off, with their tails out at full length; I should think they must have covered thirty feet or more in each spring. I saw three, two full grown and a smaller one, but some of the people said they saw four. As for guns, I am ashamed to say that none were forthcoming. My own was loaded with small shot, and my rifle and the other gun were secured to the camel-saddles by my careful servants, who had tied them with many knots lest they should fall off. I started soon after in chase of a herd of about forty giraffes, but, the country being open and I on foot, I fatigued myself to no purpose, running after them for more than two hours without ever being able to get within reasonable shooting distance. They are very wary after having once seen a pursuer, and on his second approach shamble off almost before he can see them. Their gait is the most awkward looking of any animal that I know, being something between the

up and down movement of a rocking-horse and the waddle of a Greenwich pensioner on two wooden legs; nevertheless, they get over the ground at a great pace. Our guide (whose name, by the way, was Gàddar, short for Abd el Kàder) told me afterwards that in hunting them on horseback, as the Arabs do, the great point is to have a horse that starts well, for, if you don't manage to get up with them in the first spirt, you may give up the chase at once, as they will always leave an ordinary horse far behind in the long run. As soon as I had made up my mind that further pursuit of them was useless, I had to track my way in search of the caravan, which I found waiting for me a few miles ahead. They told me that during my absence they had seen another large herd of giraffes and some ostriches a long way off in the opposite direction to that which I had taken. A little after midnight, we being all asleep excepting Gàddar, whose watch it was, I was suddenly awakened by the mules snorting and struggling to get loose. Seeing him afoot and armed, I asked him what was amiss. He said he didn't know, but thought that a lion must be near; he was going to see: I took my rifle and accompanied him. We looked all round, but neither saw nor heard anything likely to cause the mules any alarm, and so returned to the fire, and after seeing to their fastenings and patting them a bit they got quite quiet. As his watch was nearly over, and mine came next, I sat out the remainder of his with him, and we had a long conversation about his life and adventures. I found from what he told me that my kind friend

Immer had certainly chosen the best man in his tribe for my guide. Gàddar was by profession guide and spy to the parties of brigands, or, to be more polite, foraging expeditions, which frequently start from Mai Gova to plunder the herds of the neighbouring tribes. In these affairs, the chief, he, and his father, who is or was also a guide, have certain proportions of the booty, the remainder being divided among the rest of the party. He told me that he was scarcely ever in the villages, the greater part of his time being employed in hunting or some sort of brigandage. His acquaintance with the desert and all that belonged to it was quite marvellous. I should almost prefer him for finding game in this country to the best dog I ever met with, for, to say nothing of his having eyes of telescopic power, he had a natural or acquired instinct which enabled him to tell where any animal was, and what it was, by the slightest sign, such as a movement in the grass or a rustle in the bushes. He would frequently say, "There's a gazelle in yonder bush," long before any of the party thought of looking so far for one; and then would tell us that it was standing up and turned in such and such a direction, not that he saw the animal itself, but was watching every movement of the leaves; and sure enough, on our getting a little nearer, out would bound the gazelle. After a few evidences of his certainly wonderful quickness of sight, my servants accused him of owing this power to magic, and he at once admitted that such was the case, showing us a large amulet which he wore under his arm. His companions told us privately that there

was no knowing how he managed to do what he did in many ways—among others, he could go anywhere without danger, being able to change his appearance so completely that not even his own father could recognize him. He was said, moreover, to have appeared in two different places, a long distance apart, at almost the same hour of the day, and many other feats which to an ordinary man are impossible. They said that from a boy he had never been like other men, but always fond of wandering alone in desert places, and from these facts they evidently concluded, though unwilling to speak their minds plainly, that he had dealings with the devil, or something of the sort. The fact is, Gàddar was a remarkably clever fellow, and possessed an acuteness of sight, and a toughness of sinew, seldom to be met with even in a savage. But besides these qualities he was a noble-hearted, honest man, and as agreeable a companion as I ever met with. I found him particularly so that night over the watch-fire, for he enlivened the time and made me careless of sleep by telling me a succession of amusing anecdotes. He sat with me nearly three-quarters of an hour after his watch was done, and then rolling himself up dropped asleep in an instant. I remained smoking and amusing myself by counting the snores of my Abyssinian and the Tokrouri Abd Allah, who seemed determined to outvie one another in this peculiar kind of music. All continued tranquil for more than half an hour, when I was disturbed from my musings by a distant noise like a short growl, which made me prick up my ears; a moment

after it was repeated, but much plainer. I deliberated a while whether or no to rouse my neighbour, and was just determining that I would not do so till there was more cause, when a tremendous roar, quite close to us, saved me the trouble by waking Gàddar, who, with one of his companions, got up immediately. The mules were in a desperate state of alarm, so we tied them and the camels close to the fire. The watch following ought to have been kept by the Tokrouri, but we decided in not trusting to such a sleepy fellow, so the Arab volunteered, and we both sat with him. The lion kept us on the alert till near morning, but though, what with his roar and the snorting and plunging of the animals, there was noise enough to awaken a log of wood, none of our sleepy-headed ones ever moved from their places, and the two snorers played their duet with wonderful perseverance. Gàddar amused us much by mimicking them and making fun of them as they slept, calling them by all sorts of facetious epithets, and otherwise insulting them. He said that it was a good thing to have one or two such men in a camp, for, if a lion should take any one, he would be sure to pick out the man that snored loudest. In these countries they have a great dislike to this habit; it diminishes the value of a slave, and in some places a person purchasing one without being warned of this defect would be perfectly justified in returning him to the seller as soon as he discovered it. We had not a very comfortable night of it, nor a good breakfast next morning, for, excepting about a quart of muddy water in a skin, we had nothing

to drink or to wash in, not having found any since the afternoon of the day before. We had expected to find a puddle in a hollow near to the trees where we camped, but the buffaloes had drunk it all up. Washing is a luxury which in Africa one has frequently to dispense with, but men require to drink, perhaps more there than anywhere else. In deserts, where you have to drink stagnant rain-water, you often are glad to get a "suck" of a fluid matter that I am convinced many of my readers would not believe to be drinkable. I use the word "suck" advisedly, for, when I speak of muddy water, I mean such stuff that we were obliged to drink it out of a horn with a doubled cloth over the mouth, through which we literally "sucked" the water, being obliged to take off the strainer after every three or four mouthfuls in order to clear it of the coating of mud which adhered to it. Nor was it only on this occasion that I had recourse to this mode of filtration; I think I may safely say that I have done so hundreds of times in various countries.

Next day we saw several giraffes and ostriches in the distance, and the guide pointed out to me a rhinoceros, but too far off for ordinary eyes to see anything at all. About noon we arrived at a small pool; our four-footed friends, the giraffes and buffaloes, had apparently been there not long before us, and had made it, by trampling and polluting it, a most striking example of the rich sort of beverage of which I have spoken above. Notwithstanding, such is the force of habit and necessity, that its appearance afforded us as much pleasure, and

its contents seemed quite as palatable, as if it had been the purest spring in the world. Further on an object in the grass caught my eye, but I did not distinguish it till I had ridden past. It was a large wild cat, lying coiled up in the grass as snug as possible, and evidently fast asleep, although within a few feet of us. I called to my Abyssinian, who happened to be next to me, and, showing her to him, he crept up and hit at her with his club, but missed her; up she got, and away she went in splendid style. The Abyssinian and Abd Allah gave chase, while I, Gàddar, and the rest encouraged them on with "Go it, ye snorers," &c. &c. The Abyssinian soon gave up the hunt, but the nigger kept on for a long time, incited to perseverance probably by a strong inclination to taste her flesh. Many negroes are particularly partial to cat's-meat, esteeming it above all other game, and in reality it *is* very good. While Abd Allah was away, his comrade Saleh amused us with a story showing how fond they are of this delicacy, the slaves more so perhaps than their masters. He denied that he himself liked it, or that it was a *general* taste in Darfour. His story was as follows:— A slave, one day finding a litter of wild kittens in a tree, clambered up, and, with the greatest delight, secured them in his bosom, but, one hand being occupied in holding them, he lost his footing when descending, and fell to the ground, breaking a leg and two ribs. His wife, who was with him, unable to do anything for him alone, ran off for assistance, and quickly returned with one or two neighbours. They found the man lying on the ground

carefully examining his kittens to see if they were hurt, and cleaning them from the dust and sand they had collected by the fall. On his neighbours offering to carry him home, he groaned out, "Let me alone; don't you see that one of the kittens has still got some sand in its eye?" Here again is an example of a good story translated into nothing at all, for, on reading it in English, I find that its great merit consisted in the way in which it was told me. Sàleh, mimicking the broken dialect and peculiar enunciation of the slave, made us all laugh; but I'm afraid that, in the absence of these embellishments, it reads but poorly. The man's object, by the way, was to bring up his kittens some for fat stock and some for breeding.

Talking of peculiar food, not very long after the cat-hunt we came upon a "warran," a large lizard of the Iguano species: we not only caught it, but killed and ate it. None of us being particularly hungry, we only tasted it, but our friend Abd Allah, though perhaps he had already eaten twice as much as any of us, was unsparing of it. He said it was of all things his favourite food, but I verily believe that I have heard him say the same of almost every sort of fish, flesh, or fowl. During the day we passed several remains of enclosures used by the neighbouring tribes in former years for penning their cattle. Gàddar, with a chuckle, pointed out one or two, the contents of which he acknowledged having himself carried off. At about one o'clock we reached the river Seytit, the Taccazy of Abyssinia, and in this neighbourhood sometimes called Bahr el Hamran (the river of

the Hamran), from a tribe of Arabs that inhabit its shores. We followed its course for a considerable distance, and then, leaving it, cut across the angle formed by its junction with the Atbara, and halted on the bank of that river, just opposite to the village of Soufi, otherwise called "Hellet el Fouckha" (or Village of the Priests). After their junction, the united streams retain the name of Atbara, and are so called till they join the Nile near Berber, this river being the most important of the two; it is here of great breadth, and, as we saw it in the rainy season, of considerable depth also. Before arriving at Soufi it receives the waters of the Bahr Salama and Angrab. After shouting for a long time and making signals of distress, we perceived that the inhabitants of the opposite shore were aware of our position, and of our wish to be ferried over. Gàddar told us that we should have to wait where we were till morning, as they would require time to prepare a raft, so we lighted our fire and bivouacked as usual. We were, also *as usual*, kept on the *qui vive* by the lions and hyænas, who seemed to have much inclination to taste the flesh of our mules; and as if to make our last moments in Abyssinia as commonplace as possible, Gabrou and Abd Allah slept and snored *as usual*. Next morning we rose early, anxious to get into the new country, but the ferrymen did not seem to hurry their preparations, for it was nearly 9 o'clock before any of them took the water. So we had plenty of time to pack our traps for the swim, and to contemplate the river to our hearts' content. I passed the spare time thus

afforded me in trying to compose some poetry suited to the occasion, and really it was a very poetical moment. I was on the point of quitting for ever a country which I might well consider as a second home. Its boundary, the broad torrent, lay at my feet. Only one thing was wanting. I had no shirt, so I couldn't turn down my collar à la Byron, or I'm sure that day would have brought forth something spicy. After well trying our patience, some men at length swam over to us, with "an angareb," or native couch, supported by inflated goat-skins, after the manner of the faggot we had used on the Zarrima. Knowing that we must come to terms with them or remain in the desert, they drove a hard bargain with us, demanding at first 2*l.* for the job. After a good deal of haggling they agreed to take half that sum, although a native would have crossed for two or three shillings. We were obliged to yield, as we had neither provisions nor inclination to hold out, so, seating ourselves cross-legged on the stretcher with our clothes and baggage stuffed into the skins, we were pushed across by the swimmers: the mules followed, and all landed in safety. This mode of navigation was luxurious compared to our frail raft on the Zarrima, though even here the stretcher on which we sat was more than a foot under water. The reach opposite Soufi is tolerably smooth; the strength of the stream makes the crossing a rather long and (for the swimmers) fatiguing business; but there are none of those abominable whirlpools and eddies which caused us so much danger and annoyance in the other places: two

or three hundred yards below the village the course is broken by a number of rocks, which by their opposition break the torrent into falls and rapids, though at the same time, acting in a measure as a weir, they may be the cause of the comparatively quiet state of the part where we crossed.

CHAPTER XLI.

JOURNEY TO KHARTOUM.

WE were welcomed at the landing-place by a number of well-dressed respectable-looking gentlemen, who seemed as if they had known me before, they were so very civil and glad to see me. They treated me just as a man in the country does a friend who arrives at the railway station, where he has been waiting for him with the dog-cart. "How are you, my dear fellow? Very glad to see you! Where's your luggage? let me take it!" and so on, using nearly these very words, only not in English, persisting in doing everything for me, making themselves exceedingly useful in unpacking my property from the skins, and really in such a kind good-natured manner, that I was quite delighted with them, and felt that they were the very perfection of hospitality and all other meritorious qualities. But what do you think they were? Only spies of the Customs, who wanted to find out whether I had any taxable property with me. In this, however, they were disappointed, so I got their services for nothing. They wanted me to pay duty on Abd Allah the Tokrouri, naturally mistaking him for a slave; at which he, as was his wont, got into a furious passion, but at length, cooling a little, proved to them

that he had been in the Hedjàz as a pilgrim, and this satisfied them. After all they *were* very good fellows; one of them had some first-rate tobacco, and allowed me to empty his bag into mine, asking only for a little honey, of which I had two large skins full. I have said that this village is called "the Village of the Priests"—the reason of its bearing this name is that it is the residence of three men who are esteemed not only as chiefs, but also as saints. They are called "el Mekky" (the royal), "el Azrag" (the dark-complexioned, literally blue), and Hajji Ali. We lodged in the house of the latter, who acts as civil chief. The first named is, however, the principal man and greatest saint. He is universally believed to offer up the sunset prayer in his own house at Soufi, and the "Assha" (an hour and a half after) at Mecca, which is distant some hundreds of miles, and on the other side of the Red Sea. It is said that a pilgrim from his own village once saw him there, and was cautioned by the saint not to reveal what he had seen to any one, on pain of death. The pilgrim returned and remained for some time in Soufi, but, dying suddenly, his brother confessed that he had divulged the secret only a few minutes before he was taken ill.

The inhabitants bathe and wash fearlessly in the reach opposite the town, believing that part to be free from crocodiles, owing to the neighbourhood of these holy men, although the river is full of them both above and below the village. The Egyptians have a story similar to this, asserting that the tomb of a saint, which is built on the banks of the Nile a couple of days above Cairo,

prevents the crocodile from passing any further down the river. This miracle is not half so well got up as that of Soufi, for one naturally inquires, "If the sanctity of the tomb protects the river on one side of it, why can't it do as good a turn to the other side?" And it strikes one at once that the reason of these animals not being found in Lower Egypt is probably that the climate does not suit them, whereas in the case of the Atbara there is no reason that I can assign, unless it be the rocks and rapids which I have mentioned as below the village. The inhabitants are mostly Jàlyn, who fled with Nimr from Shendy, but afterwards settled here, within the limits of the Turco-Egyptian government, on receiving full pardon from the late Ahmed Pacha, who promised to treat them well, and limited their taxation to an annual payment of thirty piastres (about six shillings) per householder. They spoke highly of the moderation of their present rulers compared with the extortion of the Abyssinians, but I can account for this unusual trait in the Turkish character in two ways: first, that the Turks really do not exact more than the fixed sum, because they feel that it is better to get a little from the people of Soufi, than, by demanding too much, to drive them back across the Atbara. With Nimr, they would be out of reach of pursuit; it would be difficult for a Turkish force to cross the desert country between the river and Mai Gova, but even if they attempted it, and succeeded, they would find that the place had been vacated long before they reached it. It would take some time before a force could be brought together, and several days more before

they could arrive at their destination. Meanwhile, Nimr has many friends and relatives all over the Bellad es Soudan,* who, on the first rumour of danger, would send a dromedary over to him; a courier, well mounted and on such a mission, would travel much farther in one day than an army could in six. My other supposition is that, not remaining long with these people, I was not sufficiently in their confidence for them to tell me their true feelings on this subject. There are too many spies about for an Arab to tell his opinion of the Turkish government to a stranger. I found this out some time after, by observing that a native's praise of his rulers generally diminished in proportion to the increase of our intimacy. For instance, many a man who, at our first interview, had spoken in the most glowing terms of the Turks in general, and of his immediate governors in particular, has gradually come round, till, after some acquaintance, he would remark that they were the scourge of the Almighty or of the devil; that, "where a Turk once sets his foot, the grass never again grows," and so on. Such is, I believe, the true esteem in which they are mostly held by their southern subjects, and, I fear, it is a pretty just one. We remained altogether three days at Soufi, and, though I did not meet with any such men as Immer, I have no reason to complain of the treatment I received. I was well found in provisions, though my host Hajji Ali seldom deigned to

* Bellad es Soudan, or the country of the Blacks, is the Arabic name by which the provinces of Upper Nubia, Sennâr, Kordofan, &c., are always called.

gladden me with the light of his countenance; I suppose he was afraid of bringing his sanctity into too close contact with a Christian. However, he showed me much true kindness in a rather distant manner, sending me messages every now and then to inquire if I wanted anything, and to caution me against admitting certain persons to too close intimacy with my baggage. Among others he especially warned me against one Tàher, a Hamrani, who had been our *compagnon de voyage* from Mai Gova. He need not have taken this trouble, for I already suspected him of having stolen some small articles which had disappeared by the way. He was a nasty disagreeable-looking fellow, but had generally managed to conduct himself pretty well towards our party. He had fled to Nimr to escape the punishment due to him for having killed a man of his own tribe. Nimr received him far too kindly, giving him a letter of recommendation to his chief, a present of money sufficient for his expenses by the road, and a severe admonition for the future. I say *too kindly*, because I suspect the rascal had not killed his man in fair fight. By cross-examining him I drew out that, while disputing, he had struck his adversary unawares, and had afterwards received a wound from him. The scar which he bore was a terrific gash on the left shoulder, from a broadsword, which entirely crippled one arm; but, having evidently been delivered from behind, it would appear that Tàher was a cur who, after wounding his adversary, had turned tail to avoid his payment, while the other must have been a good man to have

followed and so severely handled him after being mortally wounded.

The people of Soufi were very curious, and I had to deliver a dozen lectures per diem on the construction and uses of my various arms and instruments, but, for my part, I never considered this an annoyance, but invariably acted in the same manner by my auditors, and they always received and answered my numerous interrogations of "What's this?" and "What's that?" "How do you do this?" and "Why do you do that?" with the utmost good nature. This (as we should call it) impertinent curiosity is customary here, and is by no means thought extraordinary. I have often found it to be an excellent means of gaining access to the good will of the people of a place where I had just arrived. When I first began travelling in Africa I had the same dislike at seeing a crowd of people squatted round me, and watching my every movement, that most young travellers experience, and generally managed either to get out of the way or to rid myself of the intruders by some means or other. But, after a time, perceiving that this was not at all the way to become acquainted with the people, I adopted a diametrically opposite line of conduct. A single glance round the circle generally sufficed for me to discover who was the great man of the party, and, singling him out, I started a conversation by such questions as the above.

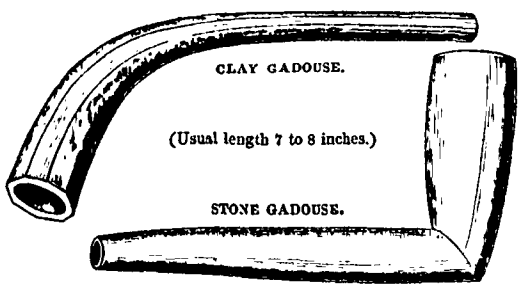
One morning, when I was sitting alone writing, a strange-looking figure entered the hut. His countenance bespoke him an idiot, or little better; his costume might

have been that of a hybrid between the slave of a poor Turk and a Berbery bargee in bad circumstances. It consisted of a shocking bad red cap, minus the tassel, a long but very ragged blue shirt, and a pair of common and much-worn slippers. He saluted me with "Haw!" then a stupid grin, and, after a pause, "How d'ye do?" in a drawling slobbering voice. Then, after standing a while staring and grinning at me, he expressed a fear that I had forgotten him. I told him, in the most polite manner, that I thought he must mistake me for some one else, as I had never been in that country before. Still I fancied that there was a something in the face that I remembered, and was about to ask him when and where I could have had the honour of being introduced to him, when he burst into a laugh, which changed his countenance altogether, and, taking off his cap, Gàddar the guide stood before me. He had adopted the disguise partly to amuse me, partly, as he told me, because he had certain reasons for not wishing to be too generally known in the town.

We were detained three days at Soufi, unable to procure any camels to take us to Cattàrif. Before starting I received a present of a charm from each of the three "fouckha;" one was against robbers, wild beasts, &c., another against fevers and other maladies, and the third was to make me agreeable to great men, kings, &c.

The road to Cattàrif lay across a plain of dark soil, without a single tree or undulation to break its monotonous appearance. We had scarcely left the town when a small boy, a child of about six or seven years old, came

running alongside my mule, asking me with much earnestness, though not in the tone of a beggar, to give him a few paras.* I gave him the value of a halfpenny, which he received with the greatest delight, and, in answer to my inquiry as to what he wanted to buy, told me that he had not had a whiff of tobacco for nearly two days. Amused at his precocious taste, I offered him some, asking him, at the same time, if he had a pipe. He immediately pulled out a "gadouse," such as the Bedouins smoke, and, filling it, began to smoke away like an old-fashioned chimney, remarking only that to his taste my tobacco was too mild. The "gadouse" is merely a bent tube, rather broader at one end than the other, and usually made of clay, but sometimes cut out of stone. Its form is that which, of all others in these countries, most nearly resembles the European clay pipe.



At about five o'clock in the afternoon we entered a hamlet belonging to Cattàrif. A hut was immediately provided for our lodging, but as it was very small and full

* The para is a small Turkish coin, which, like the French centime, is more imaginary than real. The smallest coin in common circulation is the five-para piece resembling our farthing. "Para," by the way, is the Turkish name: in Arabic it is called "fodda," "meydi," or "diwàni."

of mud, and the evening being fair, we much preferred sleeping outside with the camels; so the people brought us some stretchers, and then sat with us to inquire all about me and my motives for travelling. Ali, a Jâly who had joined us at Soufi, and had succeeded in keeping us in a roar of laughter all the way thence by telling us stories, singing songs, and cracking jokes on every one we passed, now began to astonish the weak minds of the natives by seriously confiding to them that I was a great Turk, travelling *incog.* by order of his highness Mohammed Ali Pacha, to see and report to him the conduct of the various governors of the Bellad es Soudân, especially in regard to their treatment of his black subjects. I was immediately surrounded; every one had some petition which I was to remember, or some grievance which I was to lay before the Viceroy. It was of no use that I protested that I was nothing but a poor derwish—they had been prepared for that answer; and at last, as the only means of silencing their importunity, I was obliged to promise that I would do my best for them.

While this was going on we were joined by a very fierce-looking man, whom I had not seen before. He walked straight up to me, saying in a rough tone of voice, "Get up, and follow me!" I asked him what he wanted. "Never you mind, only come along!" was his rather unsatisfactory reply. I got up, as did also one or two of my companions, but he ordered them back, and led me on to a distant part of the village, till we arrived at a house from which proceeded the voices of several

persons in conversation. He seized me by the arm, and dragged me in through a very low door. The hut was partially lighted by a piece of rag, aided by a little fat in a clay saucer; around it sat a dozen or more half-naked armed savages. My guide led me across the apartment, and, taking a gourd full of some muddy-looking fluid from under a cloth, ordered me to drink. Was it deadly poison? For the interest of the adventure, I am sorry to answer that it was not exactly that, but a beery fluid they call "merissa." I drank a good deal of it, and so did my fierce-looking guide, and so did the armed savages, each one in his turn; and then we had another supply, and another, till we all got very affectionate. From the abrupt manner in which I was summoned and introduced, I did not at all anticipate such a result; for though I had not the slightest suspicion of any danger awaiting me, I expected, at least, that the man had something of great importance to communicate. After a couple of hours passed in conviviality, I returned to my couch comfortably drowsy, and soon fell asleep.

Shortly after, I was awakened by the arrival of a party of strange Arabs, who wished to camp with us. The chief, on being told of it, came to them and demanded their papers; finding that they had none, and getting nothing but evasive replies to his questions, he ordered them to take themselves off to a distance outside the town, at the same time directing three or four of his people to sleep near us in case of any fresh arrival. These precautions appeared to me

most extraordinary, till I was informed that, owing to the disturbed state of the country, the Cashif (Turkish sub-governor) had ordered that no village was to receive any strangers who travelled without baggage, or who had not a paper, signed by the chief of their tribe, stating who they were and what was their errand, and had declared that the chiefs of villages would be liable for any robberies committed in them. Our host told me that several had taken place lately, and cautioned me to keep a good watch every night, or we might be plundered.

The country adjacent to the Settite (or Taccazy) is, as I have before said, inhabited by the Hamran, a tribe of Bishàry origin, which still uses the Hadendàwy language, like its mother race. They may almost be considered as a subtribe of the Bisharin, for there is no separation between them; the people of Taka, and all the Bedouins east of the Nile from these parts, and Massàwa on the Red Sea as far as the middle of Upper Egypt, being of the same stock and speaking the same language. The rest of the country, that is to say towards the Blue Nile and Sennàr, is occupied by the Davainas, Shoukoureyas, and a few Jàlyn. These are the inhabitants of the inland parts, and, though they live a good deal in houses, are still considered as Bedouins. The banks of the Nile are occupied by quite a different set of people, who are of various castes and races, but are not classed in tribes like those above mentioned. The Shoukoureya are frequently called "Nas Abou Sin," from their great chief "Abou Sin,"

who holds the rank of "Sheikh el Mashàikh" (or chief of chiefs). Besides him are two others of this dignity, "Abou Jin," great chief of the Davainas, and "Abou Rof," of the Jeheynas, who inhabit the upper part of the peninsula of Sennàr. Six or eight miles from the hamlet where we slept is the market village of Cattàrif, and the residence of Sheikh Abou Sin. The chief being absent, we were received by his agent the Faky Rahlid, who showed us into the strangers' hut, and furnished us with provisions. The other principal village, called "Hellet el Càshif," from being the residence of the Turkish governor, Ibrahim Cashif, is south of this one, and distant about two hours. Next day the market was held; I strolled out, and amused myself much with the scene. I had expected something rather better than what I found it to be, for all the way from Mai Gova, whenever I had inquired in vain for any little article, I was invariably consoled with the assurance that I should find everything at Cattàrif, as easily as if I was at Cairo. It was a great market, they said. Well, so it was, for it covered a considerable extent of ground; but I discovered that, although the articles offered for sale were in greater quantity than I had before met with, their quality was little or no better than at the other villages. Pepper (black and red), garlic, onions, common glass beads, cotton cloths, spices, and "kòhl" (antimony) for the women's eyes, appeared to be the principal articles of foreign produce. These were spread on the ground before the sellers, who squatted in the open air during the whole day, only a

few of them using a home-made parasol to shelter them a little from the burning rays of the sun. The crowd, with its accompaniments of noise and smell, was by no means agreeable to me, used as I was to comparative solitude and plenty of fresh desert air, but the novelty of the scene detained me for some hours. The only white man besides myself in the whole assembly was a dirty ragged soldier of the Turkish irregular cavalry, probably the kaimagàm of the place. To see him stalk up and down, proud with the consciousness of being monarch of all he surveyed, one would have judged him to be at least a pacha, whereas the poor devil was in the enjoyment of a full pay of twelve shillings a month, and that too settled only once every year or two. The humblest of the humble when at home, no turkey-cock could equal his pomposity when among the niggers. A few half-naked Arabs, galloping up and down to show the paces of their dromedaries, formed by their wild gestures, yells, and screams, the most interesting objects of the scene—"to me" I ought perhaps to add, for I dare say that I myself appeared to other people the greatest curiosity. I was dressed in the light costume of the Arabs, a pair of drawers, and a "ferda" thrown over my shoulders. The heavy two-edged sword that Immer had given me hung over my left arm, to which also were bound a heap of amulets and a knife; so that in dress and weapons I was a nigger, in colour a Turk—an incongruity which probably never was seen in the Bellad Soudàn before that day, nor perhaps ever will be again. We made an

excellent dinner of camel's-meat, the first time that I remember ever having tasted it. Some people who are unused to it dislike it, either from taste or prejudice. I liked it from the first mouthful, and, having eaten a great deal during the following three years, consider it about the best meat I know. As to the milk, I prefer it *by far* to that of any other animal, though many white men can't bear it; and others who don't dislike the taste complain that it serves them like a black dose. After dinner some of the party made a dessert of locusts, which swarmed in the country; they pulled off the legs and wings, and roasted their bodies on an iron plate. I tried them, but found them not particularly good being in flavour something between the burnt end of a quill and a crumb of linseed cake. Possibly, if I had tasted them before dinner, I should have formed a different estimate of them.

We tried to procure camels for hire, but no one would allow his beasts to go the journey for less than their full value, on account of the quantity of mud, and of the fact that at this season of the year a peculiar kind of fly plagues the animals to such a degree as to make them ill, and sometimes to cause their death. My comrade Ali made an exchange of his old and tired she-ass for a younger and better one, giving a dollar to boot. Unable to hire any camels, we were obliged to wait a week in order to purchase some the next market-day. During the interval the hospitality of our host diminished greatly, so that at last we were obliged to get a woman to make our porridge for us. We were

a little annoyed at this, for, though our appetites were good, our pockets were nearly empty, and we had a number of poor Tokrouri pilgrims lodging with us, who, of course, shared our supper when they could not beg one elsewhere. All our party suffered more or less from fever, except myself, so that I was glad enough to buy a couple of camels and start. They cost, the one 14*s.* 7*d.*, the other 19*s.* 10*d.*

Our first day's journey was shortened by Sàleh's being taken with a severe fit of ague. Luckily, we had not long passed a small village, so we returned and were well received by the inhabitants, who lodged us in the mosque. They are "Terrigas," or schismatics, and have a peculiar mode of clapping their hands when chanting their litanies. They are not much noticed in this country, but some of them who went to Darfour were tried before a council, and, their chanting being pronounced a dangerous innovation, part of them were expelled the country, and the others disappearing are supposed to have been murdered.

While talking of religious sects, I may mention that there is a very peculiar one in this neighbourhood, the followers of which are neither Mohammedans, Christians, nor Jews, but are called "the people of Abou Jerrid." This is the name of their saint, prophet, or whatever he may be. They are very secret in all matters regarding their religion, but are supposed to have a book in lieu of the Bible or Koran. "Abou Jerrid" means "the man with a wand." Literally, Abou means *father*; but it is applied also in the sense of pos-

sessor of any peculiarity. Thus, a man with a very large moustache will be nicknamed Abou Shannab; and any other marked feature will confer a similar title on its owner. The Governor-General, who was at Khartoum during the latter part of my stay, got the sobriquet of Abou Amoud (he of the tent-pole) on account of his ordering one of his officers to be bastinadoed with that article. "Jerrid" literally means a palm-branch, but is frequently applied to any sort of wand. I have never met with these people, and therefore can only tell the little that I have heard of them. May they not be a remnant of the old Christianity of these countries, although, perhaps, unaware of the fact themselves? Their secrecy may have originated in their forefathers having been obliged to conceal their religious opinions at the time of the compulsory conversion of their country, and the name of "the man with the wand" may have been given by the Mohammedans of later days, from some confused idea of our Saviour and the Cross. Frescoes of the saints are found daubed over many of the old ruined temples of Nubia: a badly executed or defaced representation of our Saviour bearing his cross would easily suggest to an Arab the idea of a "man with a staff." This is, of course, only a conjecture of my own, and may have no valid foundation whatever.

As it happened, our detention was not inopportune, for we had scarcely got housed, when the rain came down in torrents, and kept pouring during the whole of that night and the following day. An hour or two after

leaving this village (which is called Bakhit's) we came upon a "khor," or gulley, which, being very deep in water, and still deeper in mud, formed an impassable barrier across our road. After going along it for a few hundred yards, I thought we might get over, there being little water in that part, so I rode in on my mule, but in the middle, the mud taking her up to the shoulders, we stuck fast, and I was forced to dismount. I sank above the knees, and we had much difficulty in reaching the opposite side. My companions and servants, who had amused themselves vastly at our struggles and the appearance we presented on landing, did not attempt to follow, but continued exploring its course downwards till they found a tolerably sound ford. Thus we lost nearly two hours. Towards evening we arrived at a large heap of stones and rocks, piled up as it were in the middle of a smooth plain, on whose surface not another stone, however small, was to be seen. It scarcely seemed the work of nature, and presented a very singular appearance; but we had not much time to examine it, for the rain coming down obliged us to have recourse to our old system of stripping and squatting under pieces of leather. A few half-starved-looking and nearly naked Arabs came to us and begged for a little food, declaring that they had had nothing to eat for two days and a half. They were cultivating a bit of ground hereabouts, and there was no habitation near at hand. We gave them what relief we could, but our own supply was not abundant. Meat will not keep more than a day, and is

not always to be procured, so our food during nearly all the last journey was limited to flour and honey, which we made into cakes. Sometimes we carried a fowl or two with us, but I always found them more trouble than they were worth, and got completely into the native way of going three or four days on very short commons, and making up for lost time whenever I met with an opportunity.

The cultivation of the ground that I alluded to above is very simple. Instead of a plough the Arabs use a pole about five or six feet long and sharpened at one end. Carrying this in a horizontal position, the cultivator walks along quickly, merely dropping the point into the soil, so as to scratch a little hole every four or five feet, into which a few grains of millet are dropped, covered up, and left to take their chance.

The shower ended, I made a voyage of discovery to all parts of our little island, but discovered nothing more agreeable than that the opposite side sheltered the graves of some Arabs, and that the whole was well peopled with snakes and other vermin.

Notwithstanding, we passed a very comfortable though rather moist night, and, rising early, arrived the following afternoon at "Jebel Attash," or the Mountain of Thirst. This is a small range of rocky hills running about N.E. and S.W. We entered one of the villages, and I was again described by our facetious friend Ali as a very great man. He had actually the impudence to tell some of the people in confidence that, although he did not know who I was precisely, he had some idea

that I was Mohammed Ali Pacha himself. Poor, dear, innocent Arabs! The Pacha at that time was above eighty years of age! Many persons accordingly came to pay their respects, and the chief, with all due humility, informed me that he had ordered a sheep to be brought for my supper. A very fine one was dragged in by the people of the village where I was lodged, but they of the other hamlet refused to subscribe towards its cost; hence a dispute arose between them, and we were obliged to slaughter the animal at once, lest they should take it back again.

In the plain below was a large camp of Baggàra Arabs. These Bedouins are so called from their devoting themselves entirely to pasturing immense herds of horned cattle, which form their sole property. They wander about in search of grass for their animals, migrating as soon as the supply fails them. Their proper country is on the west shore of the White Nile above Kordofan; but one tribe has been lately compelled to fix themselves in the peninsula of Sennàr, at about a day's journey from El Khartoum. A rich man among them will own from one to two thousand head of cattle. The oxen are used as beasts of burden, and, when well broken for riding, get over the ground very fast at an easy amble. When a tribe migrates some of the oxen are laden with the baggage, and others carry the women and children, and the whole procession presents a very novel and picturesque appearance. The Baggàra never think of cultivating the ground: they live almost exclusively on meat and milk, particularly the southern

tribes, among whom I have met men, upwards of sixty years old, who had never tasted corn in any shape. Next day we passed several villages and a range of small hills running nearly E. and W., called "El Gella Araing." Arriving towards noon at an enormous sycamore-tree, we were tempted by its shade to halt awhile, but the flies, of which I have spoken as so dangerous to camels, prevented our doing so, by attacking the animals till they almost drove them mad. Even we ourselves were obliged to keep our bodies as closely covered as possible, for their sting was as sharp as a wasp's. We were forced to walk and look carefully after the baggage, for the mules and camels did nothing but kick and plunge all the way. Towards evening we stopped at a Bedouin camp.

I should like my readers to pass a night in such a place as that which I am going to describe; I am sure they would enjoy it. We arrived hot and fatigued after a long day's journey, just as the sun was setting. No one but the women and children, and a few infirm old men, were in the village, the greater part of the male population being out in the desert with the flocks and herds. We looked out for the largest and best hut, near which might be a convenient space for tethering the animals. As we passed between the rows of huts no one stared at us or made any remarks, but gave a cheerful and kindly answer to our salutation. Neither the mistress of the house we selected, nor an old man who sat at its door, nor any of the neighbours, seemed even surprised at our having come thus uninvited, but

welcomed us at once, and, while we were "nakhing"* and unloading our camels, busied themselves, some in preparing refreshments, others in collecting stretchers and mats for our beds; the neighbours volunteering their assistance and the loan of their furniture. As soon as we were seated, two or three patriarchs came to us, and, sitting by us, renewed their expressions of welcome. "Abrey"† and water sweetened with honey, sour milk, and sundry other cooling beverages, were brought in large calabashes by the children of the house. The old gentlemen took them, and, after tasting them, handed them to us, with "Ah! this is nice and cool, you must needs be parched; drink, and moisten your lips." Good old creatures! they seemed as if every gulp we took gave them as much satisfaction as it did the drinker. As a matter of course pipes were lighted, and, while enjoying that greatest of all luxuries to a tired man, we had time to look about us. I wish I could describe the scene,—that soft doubtful twilight that, for a single instant, separates the glories of a tropical day from the beauties of the night, and which seems to be the signal for all nature to be hushed—not, as with us,

* "Nakhing" a camel means making it lie down, which is done by gently jerking at its halter and making a guttural noise in the throat.

† Abrey is a sort of millet cake baked very thin, and fermented in some manner till it becomes quite acid. It is kept broken up into small pieces, and is frequently carried on journeys. Two or three handfuls of this left to stand for a few minutes in a gourd full of water forms a very agreeable drink, and, with the addition of a little honey, a capital substitute for lemonade. The bowl and its contents are handed from one person to another till the last drop of liquor is drained off, and then the bits of soaked bread are eaten also.

gradually and imperceptibly, but at once. After a few minutes—

> "A dewy freshness fills the silent air,
> No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck, nor stain,
> Breaks the serene of heaven:
> In full-orb'd glory yonder moon divine
> Rolls through the dark blue depths."

In the camp innumerable fires were blazing, one or two before each dwelling; over these were grouped the young women of the tribe, busily preparing for the return of their hungry fathers and brethren. You might have gone the round of the whole lot and not have found one absolutely "plain," scarcely one in ten that was not absolutely pretty. Their forms were exquisite, and neither constrained by dress nor rendered ugly by fashion, but clothed in the light and elegant costume of innocence and a few shreds of leather, and placed by nature in positions that would delight an academician, and drive a ballet-dancer mad from jealousy. Should any of my readers wish to paint the scene, they must not forget plenty of strong lights and shades from the fires, and if they can manage to introduce a distant barking of dogs, lowing of cattle, and bleating of sheep, it would greatly add to the truth as well as the interest of the picture. In a short time a stately herd of camels appeared leading the way for a multitude of smaller fry. The silence of the camp was, for a moment, relieved by the interchange of affectionate greetings between the men and their families. Then, after our host had welcomed us, and inquired if his people had treated us properly during his absence, supper for man and beast

was supplied in profusion. The people of the house, and many of the neighbours, joining us, and the other families forming in knots near their dwellings, gave our evening meal the appearance of a great picnic party. After a little quiet friendly chat over sundry bowls of new milk the stillness gradually returned to the camp, as its inmates dropped off one by one into the land of dreams. It is a real luxury to be able to sleep out of doors on a warm bright night, with just the least possible breath of air to fan your cheeks. Talk about comfort in a bed-room!

But, seriously, I've seen a good many different races of men, and tried their modes of life, and my firm conviction is that no civilized man enjoys half the happiness, either of mind or body, that falls to the lot of the desert Arab.

We had not proceeded far on our next day's journey when, passing a village by the roadside, an old man, who had joined us at Cattârif, begged us to halt for a time, as he had a bag of salt to deliver to one of the inhabitants, and some other business to transact; we complied, and, as it turned out, the delay was for the best, for we had scarcely been there half an hour when the rain came down, and poured incessantly till eight o'clock in the evening, when, the moon showing herself, we saddled our beasts and started for a night journey. It is quite wonderful how one gets over the ground by moonlight; the animals seem to go much faster than in the heat of the day, and the time passes more rapidly to their drowsy riders. About midnight I thought I would take

a nap, and so rested my hands, one on each side of the pommel of the saddle, monkey fashion, and soon closed my eyes. Reopening them, after what appeared to me a five minutes' doze, I found the caravan proceeding in precisely the same order as before, some talking, some nodding, and some singing; but, on looking round the sky, I perceived that the morning star was already a quarter of an hour above the horizon, and while I was yet wondering how this could be, and rubbing my eyes, the sky gradually became bluer, and at last the sun rose in full splendour. Two hours after we saw the river Rahad on our left; it is narrow, but at this time of the year very deep and muddy; its banks are well wooded, and the resort of many very beautiful species of birds. During the whole morning our road ran parallel to its course, though at some distance from it; at noon we halted close to the water's edge, and remained enjoying ourselves in the shade, and taking out the remainder of our last night's allowance of sleep, till half past two, when we resumed our journey, which brought us by five o'clock to the remains of a deserted village, one of the many which are to be met with in this neighbourhood, the people having fled to some out-of-the-way desert, to escape the oppression of the Turks. We halted, attracted by the lodge-poles, which alone remained to show the former extent of the place, but offered to us ready means of constructing a tent or hut as a protection against the weather, and plenty of good fuel close at hand. In a few minutes we had made ourselves very comfortable, having knocked up a snug little shed, and

lighted fires big enough to roast a dozen oxen; the only drawback being that the old timber and rubbish swarmed with scorpions, which, attracted by the heat, came "en masse" to our camp. We killed about thirty during the first hour or two; three of these had crawled into the legs of my drawers as I sat by the fire. Abd Allah the Tokrouri, pulling off their tails and roasting them, ate a good many of these disgusting insects, believing that by so doing he rendered himself proof against their venom; by an odd coincidence he was the only one of our party who got stung, which he did next morning while putting a log of wood on the fire. Luckily it had no severe effect on him, for a little scarification with a knife, and cautery with a piece of live charcoal, were the only remedies we could command.

But I must not forget to mention an incident which occurred during the night. I had finished my watch of two hours and had fallen asleep, after giving, as usual, strict injunctions of vigilance to the others who were to succeed me. It seems, however, that they had more respect for Morpheus' will than my commands, for some time after midnight I was awakened by a distant shouting, and, getting up, found the guard sitting on his hams before the fire, with his knees up and his head between them: I kicked him, at the same time inquiring who called. "Who are you?" was asked by some one a hundred or two yards off. "Travellers." "Men or women?" "Men." "Then you ought to be ashamed of yourselves! Are you all so weak or drowsy that you cannot look out for your lives and property in such places as

this? Had we been aught but honest men we could have cut your throats like so many sheep!" After this friendly though not over-flattering piece of advice, the speakers passed on, and as they got a little into the firelight we distinguished eleven camels, carrying two men each, and a party on foot. Judging by the song of one of them, we guessed them to be Maghrebin (Moorish) soldiers, and afterwards heard that there were some of these and a few Arabs of Abou Jin's people, and that they were in pursuit of some runaway villagers. In these countries travellers never approach a halted party by night without first hailing them, lest they should be welcomed with a too warm reception.

Next noon found us again halted on the Rahad. After passing the villages of El Beyoud and Yakoub, the rain forced us to seek shelter under some trees before we had advanced more than an hour on our afternoon's journey. During the storm we were joined by some pilgrims from Bornou, who were travelling in the opposite direction, having left Abou Kharraz the day before. We proceeded as soon as the weather permitted, intending to halt at sunset; but when that hour arrived we were in a plain of black mud, without a single tree to offer a chance of a little firewood, so we had to continue our journey, and, the night being dark and drizzly, we were forced to walk and grope our way along till eleven o'clock, when we reached a sandy rise in the neighbourhood of some trees. Here we camped, and, as if to make our comfort complete, the sky cleared a little almost as soon as we alighted. We had intended to make only a short halt

and get off long before sunrise, as we expected that a day's march would take us to the end of our journeying by land, but before midnight the clouds again darkened the sky, and it was nearly five o'clock before the moon chose to show herself and enabled us to make a start.

Just before sunrise a heavy shower again drove us to seek shelter. An hour after this we were jogging quietly along, when suddenly there appeared before us a town with square mud houses, whitewashed mosques, &c., not more than two miles distant. What could it be? We applied to Ali, who alone knew anything of the country, and he decided that it must be Abou Kharraz or the ghost of that place, for there was no other village of such importance in the neighbourhood; still he was at first as much puzzled as any of us, for we had all made up our minds to arrive for supper. However Abou Kharraz it was, and it was highly amusing to hear the remarks and speculations made on my appearance, especially when we passed the coffee-houses, where a number of Turkish soldiers were collected; my costume certainly was a queer one for a white man, and I determined to change it as soon as possible. We alighted in the house of a native chief called Sheikh Ahmed el Amin. My first efforts towards establishing a wardrobe consisted in the purchase of a few yards of coarse calico, which I obtained of an Egyptian pedler, who was good enough to show us how to cut them into shirts, and then we had a day or two's employment in stitching them. It would have amused my fair readers vastly, if they could have seen our handiwork. I and

most of our party were very good with an awl, but somehow we found that our cobblery did not assist us much in hemming the shirts. Our friend the hawker suffered much from a peculiar itching and soreness about the elbows, and I doctored him with sulphur and grease, in gratitude for which he gave me a very greasy old "tàgkeya," or white skull-cap, of which he had a duplicate. Before presuming to wear this article of luxury, I had it washed and set about getting my head shaved. This was not an easy operation, for we had no soap, nor was there a razor to be found with any of us, and so we set to work with our knives. From the Arab jembiya to the Darfouri elbow-knife (eighteen inches of common iron), every species of weapon was tried, each man boasting of the merits of his particular blade. The latter variety, wielded by our snoring friend Abd Allah, proved the most efficacious, but, after I had suffered the most exquisite torture for an hour and a half, sunset closed our operations, *the state of the poll* then being—one-third untouched, and the remainder in patches like tussocks in a badly drained field and bleeding from nineteen severe wounds. Not being very presentable in this state, I made myself a turban of a pair of drawers for that evening, but next morning the owner of the neighbouring coffee-house brought me a friend of his who owned an old country-made iron razor, with which he polished me off in no time. One or two Arnaouts (Albanian irregulars) called upon me, and, on my telling them of my want of clothes, they informed me that the wardrobe of one of their comrades who had died lately of dysentery

was to be sold by auction in a day or two. Accordingly, on the day of sale I presented myself at the café, and, there being very few bidders, bought for the small sum of thirty-three piastres (about six and ninepence) a greasy red cloth waistcoat, a striped cotton ditto, and the remains of what had been a red and yellow cotton sash. Another valuable lot, consisting of a (quondam) red cap, now nearly black, was knocked down to me for fourteen piastres more, so that, at a cheaper rate than even the celebrated Moses and Son could have done it, I was equipped like a Turkish soldier who had not received his pay for eighteen months—a case which very frequently occurs. There is a saying, "If you see a soldier with one pistol, he is a drunkard, for he has pawned the other for a bottle of gin; if without his jacket, a gambler; if in his drawers, a keeper of bad company; if without either jacket, trowsers, or pistols (as was my plight), a poor devil suffering from the irregularity of the pay department. As for the cap, I exchanged it and a bottle of country "araky" for one belonging to another soldier, but much too large for him.

We had to remain a few days waiting for a boat. At last one was pronounced ready to sail, and having previously sent my animals overland in charge of the two blacks, the remainder of our party, that is to say, myself, Ali the Jàly, and my Abyssinian servant, embarked. Our fellow passengers were two Egyptian soldiers, covered with vermin, and a poor Turk, who being leprous was on his way to El Khartoum to obtain his discharge. At Wàdy Ferouh we were joined by two

Greeks, who gave us the news that Ahmed Pacha Menikly had just started for Egypt. They turned out to be, one agent to a Syrian (pseudo European) gin-distiller, the other a retailer on his own account, he not having credit enough to be employed as agent to any one else. The former was the younger, and was named Yussuf Panajotti; the other was also called Yussuf, with the distinguishing sobriquet of Abou Shannab, from his being possessed of a formidable pair of moustachios. Their company much enlivened the remainder of the voyage. Abou Shannab was remarkably clever at telling tales, having in his memory a whole library of unpublished Arabic novels, after the style of the Thousand and One Nights, so that our crew, passengers and all, formed a circle round him every evening for an hour or two, and thus merrily passed the two days that we remained together in the boat. They gave me a brilliant description of the town we were approaching, declaring that it was a lovely place, with minarets, bazars, &c., quite as good as Cairo.

The river-sides were in some places very flat and dull, in others diversified with acacia woods, cultivated ground, palms, saggias, villages, &c.; but, unused to such a confined mode of travelling, I was heartily glad when we moored off the hide warehouse of Khartoum. The river making a turn here to join the White Nile, we had seen nothing of the town which lay beyond, excepting a very poor minaret and a few date-palms, so I was all expectation to see this much-praised place. Visions of the Golden Horn at Constantinople passed through my mind, and I own I was a little disappointed

to find that the warehouses and cottages, which appeared to be the suburbs, were built of brown mud. Panajotti goodnaturedly offered to lodge me till I could procure a place of my own, a piece of hospitality which of course, in the fulness of my heart and emptiness of my pocket, I thankfully accepted; so we started together, he having promised to send some asses down for the baggage. The suburbs which we first entered were traversed by a number of tortuous alleys little more than a yard wide, the huts themselves being entirely built of mud, only a few feet high, and decidedly inferior in architectural design to those constructed of the same material by a species of wasp found in these countries. The streets which we next entered were broader and a little straighter, but presented even less of the appearance of a town than the suburbs we had left, being enclosed by long mud walls, without any signs of human habitation, except here and there the top of a square shed of as dirty an exterior as themselves peeping over them. A few date-trees, or occasionally perhaps a drawn-up pomegranate, evinced that on the other side was an attempt at a garden or field. As to pavement, neither the streets nor alleys had any pretension to such a luxury. I held my tongue as long as I could, not wishing to show my impatience; but when, after walking nearly a mile, we came to nothing but a large open space of sandy ground, all in holes and lumps from the rain, and enclosed as before, I could no longer refrain from asking, "How much farther is Khartoum?" "Khartoum?" said my guide in

accents of horror at my want of appreciation of the magnificence around me, "Why, *this* is Khartoum; there before us is the palace of Moussa Bey," pointing to a long, low mud wall, with a large unpainted doorway and a few small unglazed windows, which might have been tolerably appropriate for a poor-house in Bellad es Soudân, though not half good enough for a cowshed in England. "To your left, down the street, is the Diwan Moderíya (office of Government). We have passed the Governor-General's palace, on our right by the river; and this is our house." As he said these words we halted before a small building, which alone broke the uniformity of a line of wall nearly a quarter of a mile long, and bore the outward appearance of a large "deggy salàm" (gateway) at Àdoua, being simply a covered entrance with a room on either side. One of these apartments was a lock-up, where the "araky" was stored; the other the place where it was sold and drunk. I was ushered into the latter, in which appeared a Berbery servant acting Ganymede to a parcel of soldiers. During the whole of every day, and the greater part of the night, the room was filled with Turks and Albanians, Greeks and Egyptians, blacks and mulattos, who got drunk, fought, played cards and backgammon, sang songs, and amused themselves with the dancing-girls in a most unseemly manner. Here I lodged; a bench covered with a mattrass, and occupying two sides of the room, was my sleeping-place, and also that of my Greek friend, of the Berbery Ganymede, an Egyptian ditto, my servant, and myriads of

animalcula, *every* night, with the occasional addition of one or two of the customers, of either or both sexes, who had been too drunk to go home.

The day after my arrival I found that this building was not the property of my host, but of his employer, a Syrian, who had a large and tolerably commodious dwelling separated from the gin-shop by a garden and field. Nor did it, in truth, belong to him, but to the heirs and assigns of a French trader who had died there, and to whose estate this Syrian had been appointed agent by the French Consulate in Egypt. He, however, was the ostensible proprietor, and speaking a little Italian, and having received French protection for the period of his services, he mixed only with the few Europeans then resident in Bellad es-Soudân, and considered himself as one of them. He had always received travellers into his house, and treated them with the greatest hospitality, by which conduct he had earned for himself not only a good name, but many tangible proofs of their gratitude in the shape of valuable presents, which they either gave him at parting or sent him from Cairo. But when I say travellers, I mean men who came from Egypt with their firmán and dragoman, secretary and draughtsman, valet and French cook, &c. &c.

When Panajotti informed him of my arrival he desired him not to tell me that he had done so, as he wished to look at me first and act accordingly. So, the second morning, a little, pretty, effeminate, double-faced creature walked into the gin-shop, with a long pipe in

his hand, and made a show of being astonished at seeing a stranger there; still more so, when the Greek, as had been arranged between them, told him that I was an Englishman. He sat down and began cross-questioning me, at first very politely, and, I doubt not, as he thought, very cleverly. But, partly from some hints that both Greeks had given me of his true character, which, however, his appearance alone would have sufficed to show me at a glance, I saw through him, and determined to meet him with his own weapons, although foreseeing that I should gain nothing by so doing but the satisfaction of being able to show him up in his true light; so I answered politely and with the meekest possible manner to all his interrogatories, as if awed by the neighbourhood of such a great personage. This gave him courage, and he exchanged his former timid manner for a loftier one, asking me, quite coolly, where I was going, whence I came, what was my profession, and, if none, how I meant to get my bread. I told him, truly, that I hoped to obtain some money from Egypt, and that I must take my chance till I could do so. After a good deal more such conversation he left me, and told the Greek that I might remain where I was, but that he was a fool for taking me for a gentleman, as no respectable person would ever think of travelling as I did, without a bed or a change of clothing. Panajotti answered, that he had judged me to be better than I appeared by my being possessed of good English arms; but his patron desired him to hold his tongue, asking him what *he* could possibly know of Europeans. So I

was left in the gin-shop. My Greek friend's vanity being touched, and I hope also his good feeling, he returned to me and told me all that had passed between them, at which I laughed, telling him that I had fully expected it.

During the next two or three days most of the Europeans came to look at me, I presume from sheer curiosity, for none of them offered me their services, or even asked me to visit them, and when I returned their calls I was barely requested to be seated, and was never offered so much as the usual compliment of a pipe, although, if a Turk or other European entered during my visit, a pipe was brought him immediately.

The Greek, Abou Shannab, had good-naturedly inquired of one of them who was in the habit of doing such business, whether he would cash me a bill on my bankers at Alexandria, but was answered that it was impossible, unless I had letters of credit in French or Italian. No one offered me the loan of a shilling, though all knew I had next to nothing, and I was obliged to pawn my pistols to a Greek tailor for 3*l.* 13*s.* (the price of a suit of clothes). Snip made a great fuss about the matter, and went to one of the Europeans, who drew out a paper, whereby it was agreed that if the debt stood over for more than three months I was to pay 6 per cent. per month for the next three, and that at the end of that time the pledged articles were to become the property of the lender. The European bought the pistols from him in prospective, agreeing with the tailor to give him 10*l.* for them, if, as they both ex-

pected, I should be unable to redeem them. They had cost me 25*l.* in England.

I soon left the gin-shop in disgust, and with the large sum of three dollars in my pocket, all that remained after lending two to Abou Shannab, who had been very good-natured to me, and was as badly off as myself, I spent my time in the market-place and coffee-houses, preferring the society of the rude Turkish soldiers to the cold politeness of the Europeans, sleeping with them on the benches of the coffee-shops, dining, like them, on a bit of bread and some cheese or a few radishes, and thus passed my time not at all uncomfortably. I must say that the Europeans I allude to were few in number, and principally the *would-be* great men. I afterwards met several of the smaller fry, assistant surgeons, apothecaries, and such-like, who, I am sure, would have treated me very differently had they been at Khartoum at the time of my arrival. Indeed, even there, I met with one friend among them—a poor Levantine born Neapolitan, who was employed as druggist at the central magazine. While I was at the gin-shop he was lying dangerously ill in his house. I called on him several times, and nursed him a little till he got better. He was very kind to me, though he could not assist me much, as he had received no pay for many months, and had to live on what he could borrow at an exorbitant rate of interest. He more than once told me that, dropping in upon the Europeans, he found them canvassing my situation, and much applauding themselves for their just appreciation of my merits; and that, on one

occasion, one of the party had boasted greatly of having caught me cleverly. The fact was, that I, being rather of a careless and easily-satisfied disposition, did not even write to Egypt for a supply till more than three weeks had elapsed. I intended doing so from the first day, but somehow or other each opportunity that occurred of sending a letter slipped past without my catching it —either I was engaged when I remembered it, or out, or lazy, or something of the sort.

The Europeans would inquire with much show of interest,—"Well, and when do you expect a remittance?" and, on my answering that I had not even written, would smile, as much as to say that they guessed that I should not get much if I did. At last the one above alluded to happening to meet me near his own house, and receiving my usual reply, told me that, if I chose to write at once, he would ensure the safe delivery of the letter by a government courier, who was to start that evening. So I stepped into his house and scrawled a few words on a piece of paper, which he sealed up for me, as I was forgetting to do so. This was the trap he boasted of. He told the others that I must be caught, that no one would think of giving anything for the scrawl I had sent, and that I evidently didn't know how to draw a bill. I must own that some of my drafts were rather singular in their appearance. One in particular was, I have since heard, handed about for a long while as an object of great curiosity among the London brokers. But in due time an Armenian trader at Khartoum received a letter, authorising him to advance me money

to a considerable amount. After their first fit of disappointment, what a change came over my former sneerers! I was an excellent fellow to every one—all were delighted to see me—I was invited and fêted everywhere.

Some of my readers may, perhaps, expect that I refused their invitations, and kept aloof from the fellows; on the contrary, I made the greatest possible friends of all of them, for I felt that, they being civilized men, I had no right to expect any other treatment than I had received, coming among them, as I did, without the necessary passports of a good coat and a full purse. I never once alluded to the subject, though afterwards intimate with many of them, and believe that they all learnt a good lesson, especially some who, during the next two or three years, falling into trouble, had to come to me for assistance; among these was the proprietor of the gin-shop.

I should have left my readers as soon as I had landed them safely at Khartoum, but I wished to narrate my reception here, merely to show that, excepting at Cafta, where I was for a time supposed to be come with hostile intent, I was treated inhospitably by no one during all my travels, excepting by Europeans, who had nothing against me but my apparent poverty—a *fault* which should have made me all the more worthy of their care.

During nine years of travel I met with companions of every colour, station, and religion; but never picked up with one who gave me a moment's cause to quarrel with him, or from whom I parted otherwise than with

regret. Gentle reader! Will you be as kind as they? Remember, that, in such wanderings as those in which you have accompanied me, one must be prepared for a little of all sorts—for "some of y^e^ fatte and some of y^e^ lene," as the immortal Francklin has it. Be good-natured—take the fat if you like it; and if not, leave it for some one whose taste may differ from yours. Remember Mr. and Mrs. J. Sprat.

Farewell.

THE END.

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